SAN MARCO AND VENICE

National Gallery of Victoria

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Jeffrey Spier
&
Gordon Morrison

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With the generous participation of
THE REGIONE DEL VENETO,
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NOTES FOR THE READER

Due to the frequent use of specialist terminology and unusual or uncommon religious references thoughout the catalogue, it is suggested that the reader refer to the glossary to gain a fuller understanding of object descriptions.

Dimensions of objects are provided to the nearest millimetre. Height precedes width, and width precedes depth (height by width by depth).

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Back cover illustration: Detail of **reliquary casket**, Venice, early 14th century. This casket is the subject of catalogue entry 33

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SPONSOR'S MESSAGE

We are pleased to be associated with bringing to Melbourne what we believe to be one of the most important collections of artistic treasures ever to be exhibited in Australia. This is, perhaps, a large claim to make, but these unique pieces will probably never again be allowed to leave their treasuries and museums.

Both of us are from the Veneto region of Italy. So it is with particular pleasure that we are able to play a role in the showing of our artistic and cultural heritage to fellow Australians. We hope that the visitors to the exhibition will also enjoy the San Marco and Venice collection, presenting, as it does, an important aspect of the greatness of Italy's past.

We wish the exhibition every success. In doing so, we acknowledge the part played by the Catholic Church and civic authorities in Italy, who have made the idea of showing these beautiful objects a reality. Furthermore, we express our thanks to those persons in Victoria who have worked so hard to organise the exhibition of these objects.

Rino and Diana Grollo
Principal sponsors in Australia

THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the exhibition of San Marco and Venice to the people of Victoria. Comprising over sixty of the most exquisite and rare objects from the church treasuries and museums of the Veneto and Friuli regions of Italy, this exhibition introduces the people of Victoria and Australia to art forms that have never been seen in this country before.

In its early years, Australia's culture and traditions reflected its predominantly Anglo-Celtic heritage. In the past fifty years this heritage has been greatly enriched by people from other countries, and no group within our society has contributed more to this process than the people of Italian birth or background. This exhibition is a tangible reminder of the close links that exist between Victoria and Italy. It is truly gratifying that it is the National Gallery of Victoria, of all the art museums of Australia, that will play host to this magnificent exhibition.

Such an exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity of the Regional Government of the Veneto, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to my esteemed colleague President Giancarlo Galan for supporting the exhibition so that it could be curated by a group of experts from the Procuratoria di San Marco. I also wish to thank His Eminence, Marco Cardinal Cé, Patriarch of Venice, for his continued support, and the Soprintendenza of the Ministero per i Beni Culturali of the Government of the Italian Republic for its favourable response to our many loan requests.

It is particularly pleasing that the Italian community in Victoria has played an active role in supporting and facilitating this event. Our special thanks go to Rino and Diana Grollo, the principal sponsors of the exhibition, and to Sir James Gobbo, Governor-designate of Victoria.

I am pleased to be able to say that the State of Victoria has also assisted the exhibition by making available Government indemnity for the loans.

Jeff Kennett

THE PRESIDENT OF THE VENETO REGION

The presentation of this great exhibition, 'San Marco e Venezia,' is a matter of great satisfaction for me as President of the Veneto Region. It was the region's early—and very substantial—financial and other support which has made the exhibition possible. Another important factor was the involvement of Veneti in Australia in planning and encouraging this initiative. Also, the Veneto Region is delighted that part of the proceeds of the exhibition will be used to support the Assisi Centre, which provides excellent care for Veneti and other aged Italians.

The exhibition involves not only many major items from the Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, but also precious objects from other centres in the Veneto. Some of these pieces have never previously travelled outside the Veneto.

The exhibition will advance both scholarship and general interest in the history of Venice, its art, and its culture. It will also give Veneti residing in Australia a special opportunity to appreciate and share their cultural heritage with other Australians.

I am sure that the Veneto Region's contribution will enhance the excellent links between the Region and the State of Victoria, and I wish the exhibition every success.

Giancarlo Galan

THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

The city of Venice played a crucial role in the development of Western art and history. Her astute doges and merchants controlled a maritime empire which acted as a key conduit between the ancient empires of the eastern Mediterranean and the emergent kingdoms of western Europe. Within the fabled city, protected by water, artists produced sumptuous works of silver and gold that were the envy and delight of all Europe. The Venetians themselves always credited much of their power and political cachet to the presence in their city of the remains of the saint whose symbol was a winged lion, Saint Mark the Evangelist. The symbolic presence of this figure will never be far from the visitor to this exhibition.

An exhibition of such special treasures can only be brought about through a gesture of uncommon generosity, which in this case has involved a number of institutions and individuals. At the outset the Regional Government of the Veneto made a significant financial contribution to enable this exhibition to be curated and planned, and our sincere thanks go to its president, Giancarlo Galan. A particular debt of gratitude is owed to the Patriarch of Venice, His Eminence Marco Cardinal Cé, who has always been a friend to this project. The Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, the governing authority of that great church which is also the principal lender to the exhibition, coordinated all aspects of its planning within the Veneto. I would like to thank both the First Procurator of the Basilica, Professor Feliciano Benvenuti, and its Proto, Architetto Ettore Vio, for organising the exhibition so efficiently. Finally, the National Gallery of Victoria is very grateful to Doctor Mario Serio of the Ministero per i Beni Culturali of the Italian Government, and also its Regional Superintendent, Professor Giovanna Nepi Scirè, as well as the relevant church authorities, for approving such a rich and varied group of loans.

Many of the objects in this exhibition are still in use as objects of liturgical significance. The great Pastoral Staff of San Marco, for example, is still used by His Eminence, The Patriarch of Venice on major feast days. We are very conscious of the fact that our enjoyment of these beautiful objects also deprives their owners of their proper use.

On Australian soil, the Government of the State of Victoria has most generously supported this exhibition, not least by providing indemnity for the works. Alitalia, the freight-forwarding specialists Air Express International (Australia), and Le Meridien Hotel have rendered vital assistance by moving and accommodating the objects and couriers at greatly reduced rates. The Veneto Club in Melbourne has also shown exceptional generosity, making a major financial contribution. Olivetti (Italy) has assisted by lending display cases for many of the treasures.

A group of leading Australian citizens of Italian origin deserve our heartfelt thanks for their critical assistance with the development of this exhibition. First, the exhibition's principal sponsors, Rino and Diana Grollo, whose generosity has been called upon so frequently. Without their support the exhibition would not have been possible. Mr Adolfo Cittadini and Mr Carlo Valmorbida assisted greatly during negotiations with the Venetian authorities, and His Excellency Dr Marcello Spatafora was an early advocate of the exhibition. Lastly, I should like to express a special debt of gratitude to Sir James Gobbo, who first suggested this exhibition to the National Gallery of Victoria, and who played a key role in its negotiation and realisation.

Timothy Potts

THE PROCURATORIA DI SAN MARCO

The title of this exhibition is highly significant, indicating that an essential part of the art of Venice developed around the Evangelist, Saint Mark, and the basilica dedicated to him.

While Venetians became wealthy and powerful through trade with the Byzantine Empire and the Near East, they never forgot Saint Mark as the source of their inspiration. He occupied a special place in their hearts, linked to their dreams of homecoming and remembered in moments of conflict. Saint Mark was paid homage in the spoils of conquest, and the basilica became enriched with beautiful images and architectural features showing the influence of Byzantium and the Orient. These treasures, today devoted to the veneration of the Evangelist, comprise the Tesoro di San Marco and demonstrate the centrality of this saint in Venetian culture and the lives of Veneti. Some of these masterworks come from lands over which Venice held suzerainty. Although originating in other regions, these still form part of the same culture and are filled with the same spirit of homage.

The title 'San Marco and Venice' is thus a symbol describing not only the content of the exhibition, but a spiritual and cultural bond. The ancient trade routes of the Mediterranean now stretch to all parts of the world. This exhibition represents an opportunity for Australians to return along those trade routes in an artistic and spiritual sense.

This gesture of the Regional Government of the Veneto and the Procuratoria di San Marco is aimed at forging a bond with far-off Australia—in particular the State of Victoria—where there is such an active and valuable participation of Veneti in public life. Australia is now linked to Venice through faith, culture, and civilisation. Frail barques have been replaced by aeroplanes that cover vast distances and link an ancient homeland to distant offspring. The Procuratoria seeks through its contribution and involvement to make the ties between these two worlds even closer.

Feliciano Benvenuti
Primo Procuratore di San Marco

San Marco and Venice aims by means of objects of exceptional historic and artistic value to elucidate the relationship between Saint Mark the Evangelist and his basilica, and also that between the basilica and the city of Venice. Public activities of the Venetian Republic were based on the belief that the city held the true relics of the Evangelist, identifying him with the symbol of the winged lion.

The exhibition aims to stimulate further research to explain the role and importance of the Republic of Saint Mark over its thousand-year history through two categories or levels of wealth and opulence. The first, represented by the collection of the Basilica of San Marco itself, tells the story of that great church. The second includes objects from the Veneto Region which illustrate the tight bond that united Venice with her territories. These objects are based on Byzantine models embellished with Western motifs. The visitor to the exhibition will discern several major themes, each with its own iconography, revolving around the personality of the Evangelist himself, the saint's basilica, and the Republic of Saint Mark, with its *Signoria* and doges.

From the Middle Ages until the end of the eighteenth century, Europe was the centre of social and cultural revolutions which, through mass migration, influenced the New World and the antipodes. In medieval times in particular, the city of Venice was a meeting point between East and West. Inevitably, this evolution also affected the age-long traditions of eastern Asia. 'San Marco and Venice' is a celebration in the artistic sphere of this cross-fertilisation.

Ettore Vio
Proto di San Marco

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ITALIAN MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS

This exhibition stems from a desire by the Italian community in Australia to organise a showing of Venetian art following on from the successful Australian Bicentennial exhibition 'Renaissance Art of Venice', sent to Australia by the Italian Ministry for the Arts in 1988. This present exhibition is a logical progression from the bicentennial show and represents in detail the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, when Byzantine influence merged with elements of Western culture in an artistic synthesis most fully developed in Venetian figurative arts.

Consisting of around sixty works, the exhibition includes work from the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, an area heavily influenced by Venice and having many workshops. The title of the exhibition refers to Saint Mark, the symbolic ideal of the State, whose role was inspirational to the development of Venetian figurative arts for almost a thousand years.

We are grateful to the Veneto Region and the Italian community in Australia for financial support. Thanks also go to the Procuratoria di San Marco, the National Gallery of Victoria, and to the Arts and History Foundation of Venice. It has again been shown that Italy plays a major role in the promotion of culture at the international level. This exhibition also reinforces the strong ties that the Veneto Region has with Australia's Italian community, which includes many Veneti. It draws them back to their origins and sustains the Venetian legend across the oceans.

Mario Serio

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Giovanna Palandri, Procuratoria di San Marco

With the assistance of:
David Beltrame, Fiorella Benco, Annalisa Bruni, Renata Enzo, Gabriella Delfini Filippi, Camillo Tonini, Guido Zatter

INTRODUCTION

After the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity in the fourth century, and on throughout the Middle Ages, the finest works of art were made for the glory of the Church. This exhibition presents some of the great artistic treasures preserved in the Basilica of San Marco and other cathedrals and churches in Venice and the Veneto region, acquired during the city's rise as a world power between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, when Venice served as the principal mediator, both in politics and commerce, between the Byzantine Empire in the East and the Holy Roman Empire and Italy in the West.

Church vessels and liturgical objects in this period were made of precious materials, such as carved rock crystal, silver-gilt, ivory, and enamel, often embellished with pearls and precious stones. Bookcovers of silver-gilt housed illuminated manuscripts of the Gospels. The Eucharistic wine was drunk from chalices of silver-gilt, decorated with engraved and enamelled images of saints. The Host was held in monstrances of silver or rock crystal. Even candlesticks might be made from carved rock crystal and mounted in silver. Crosses of silver-gilt and enamel and bearing ornate figural decoration were carried in processions. Bishops held staffs carved from ivory or covered with silver-gilt, and wore copes of imported silk embroidered with gold. Reliquaries enclosing fragments of bone or other remains (relics) of martyrs and saints of the early Church took many forms, such as caskets of silver or crystal, or containers in the shape of arms, legs, or heads—depending on the type of bone held within—and the relics themselves were exposed to view on special festival days so that the miraculous powers of the saints could aid the worshippers.

Standing between the Byzantine East and the Latin West, Venice absorbed elements of both cultures, and the treasures preserved in Venice reflect both foreign influences on the region and the city's own artistic development. Long fascinated with the opulent culture of Byzantium, the Venetians copied architecture, mosaics, sculpture, and works in precious metals. However, the newer styles of Gothic France and Germany and the neighbouring areas of Italy provided fresh inspiration. By the end of the twelfth century, Venice was producing its own artists and workshops, displaying a distinctive synthesis of Eastern and Western features.

THE RISE OF VENICE, AND THE BASILICA OF SAN MARCO

Venice was founded as a city after the disintegration of the Roman Empire, when inhabitants of cities on the Italian mainland such as Aquileia and Altinum sought safe haven on islands off the coast. Fleeing the Lombardic invasions of the sixth century, parts of the population of the prominent Roman city of Aquileia founded the new city of Grado and instituted a rival patriarchate. In the seventh century, citizens of Altinum moved to the island of Torcello, just north of Venice, and in 639 dedicated their own cathedral. Other islands in the lagoon, such as Murano and Venice itself, were also being settled at this time.

These islands were at first under the jurisdiction of the Byzantine Empire, but Venice, although maintaining close ties with Constantinople, had its own ambitions. By the eighth century, the Venetians had appointed their own leader, the doge (in Latin, *dux*). Constantinople granted special trading privileges to Venice in 992 in return for the city's aid against the Saracens, and Venetian merchants traded throughout the Byzantine Empire, maintaining for centuries trading stations in the Balkans, the Cyclades and Crete, and the Levantine coast. Venice soon became a major maritime power.

Despite such close ties to the Byzantine Empire, relations were often turbulent, especially in the twelfth century. During the Fourth Crusade, in 1204, Venice orchestrated the capture of Constantinople itself, and went on to dominate the feeble Latin Empire of 'Romania', which lasted until the restoration of the Byzantine Paleologan dynasty in 1261. Venice then turned its attention to the Italian mainland in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, subduing such cities as Treviso, Vicenza, Padua, and Verona.

Venice's religious and political esteem relied highly on the city's association with Saint Mark, who was regarded as the apostolic missionary to the Veneto region. The Republic deftly used the authority of the Evangelist to promote Venice as the political leader of the northern Adriatic. It is with such claims in mind that in the year 828 two Venetian merchants, with the aid of two Greek monks, clandestinely removed the remains of Saint Mark from his tomb in Alexandria, Egypt, and brought them to Venice, where they were received with great ceremony. Rather than presenting

the holy relics to Grado, which was then recognised as the seat of the Church within the region, the Venetians chose to keep the remains in Venice and to build a church to house them (a *martyrium*). Legends grew telling of Saint Mark's voyage to Aquileia and how, during a storm, he found shelter in the islands of the lagoon, aided by an angel who spoke to him in a dream with the words, *Pax tibi Marce evangelista meus* ('Peace be with you, Mark, my evangelist'). These are the words that can now be found inscribed on the book held by Saint Mark's emblem, the winged lion, in virtually every city and castle where Venice once ruled. Further legends related that the relics of Saint Mark were destined to rest in Venice, and episodes from this story were illustrated in enamel on the *Pala d'oro* and on the thirteenth-century mosaic decoration of the Basilica.

The first Basilica of San Marco was erected around 836 and was rebuilt twice, with the third structure, the one now standing, completed in the eleventh century. Elaborate decoration and ornamentation of the interior and exterior of the Basilica continued for centuries. Although built as the *martyrium* of Saint Mark, the Basilica was in fact the private chapel of the doge (the patriarchate moved from Grado to Venice only in 1451 and was not transferred to the Basilica of San Marco until 1807). By the thirteenth century, however, as Venice prospered, San Marco became the centre of civic pride, in effect a State church. The luxurious decoration of the Basilica and the presence of holy relics and other precious objects kept in the Treasury symbolised the considerable prestige and power of the thriving city.

VENICE, BYZANTIUM, AND THE TREASURY OF THE BASILICA OF SAN MARCO

From the earliest days, Venice and the other islands of the lagoon were closely tied to the Byzantine Empire, and marvelled at Constantinople's wealth and tradition. The cathedral on Torcello, first erected in 639 and rebuilt in 1008 by Bishop Otto Orseolo (later the Venetian doge), shows the influence of the Byzantine churches of Ravenna, and mosaics in the cathedral, dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, are highly Byzantine in style. Other church decorations and vessels, such as the marble holy water stoup from the island of Murano (cat. no. 6), were sometimes imported from Byzantium. Byzantine patronage already existed in Venice in such churches as San Zaccaria, founded by the Byzantine emperor Leo VI in the late ninth century.

As Venice's power expanded, the Venetians looked to Constantinople for artistic guidance. The Basilica of San Marco itself was modelled on the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, and the walls were covered in mosaics executed first by Byzantine artists and then by Venice's own mosaicists trained in the Byzantine tradition (cat. nos 54 to 57). The first gold and enamel *Pala d'oro* that decorated the altar of the Basilica was ordered from the imperial Byzantine workshop in the capital by Doge Ordelafo Falier in 1105. When in 1204 Venice and the Crusaders finally occupied Constantinople, the vast artistic legacy of the imperial capital was at hand.

In the wake of the conquest of Constantinople, an enormous quantity of goods was removed from the Byzantine Empire to Venice. Large numbers of coloured marble columns and capitals that once stood in Constantinople, along with sculptural reliefs and statues, were reused as decoration at San Marco. The porphyry group of Roman Tetrarchs, now built into the wall of the Basilica in the Piazzetta, and another porphyry head of a sixth-century Byzantine emperor, once mounted on the balustrade (cat. no. 11), as well as the famous bronze horses that stood on the balcony of the Main Facade of the Basilica, were all taken from the Byzantine capital. Among the booty from Constantinople were the finest products of the Byzantine workshops, once kept in church treasuries and imperial chapels. The exquisite Chalice of the Patriarchs (cat. no. 15), carved from agate, mounted in silver-gilt, and decorated with enamel, pearls and semiprecious stones, is thought to have been made for the Chapel of Saint Theophylact in the Great Palace of Constantinople. Byzantine bookcovers made of silver-gilt, and ornamented with enamel and pearls, were reused to house lectionaries for services in San Marco (cat. nos 16 to 18). Many more fine objects from San Marco are now lost, melted down in 1797 by the occupying French army on orders from Napoleon Bonaparte in order to secure the resulting 535 kilograms of silver and gold bullion.

The treasures stored in San Marco were a constant source of wonder for both the Venetians and foreign visitors. As early as the thirteenth century, Venetian writers speak with pride of the beauty of San Marco and its contents. The spectacle of the lavish festivals in Venice, in which reliquaries from the Treasury were carried in processions, is described by historians and portrayed in paintings of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by Gentile Bellini and Vittore Carpaccio. Countless visiting dignitaries, from the German emperor Frederick II in 1232, to embassies from the Shah of Persia, insisted on seeing the treasures, and all remembered Venice as the custodian of such inestimable works.

VENICE AND ISLAMIC ART

For much of its existence, Venice had stood at the hostile frontier with the Islamic world, yet there was still considerable contact. The port of Alexandria in Egypt was frequented by Venetian merchants, as were numerous harbours on the Anatolian and Levantine coasts. Islamic art exerted a strong influence, especially in its use of floral patterns in architectural settings. Many precious objects found their way to Venice, and the Treasury of San Marco contains more than twenty significant works of Islamic art, most notably fine carvings of rock crystal from tenth-century Fatimid Egypt, and glass vessels. How such ancient objects arrived at San Marco is unknown, but perhaps they too were preserved in the imperial treasuries of Constantinople and brought to Venice in the thirteenth century. At a later date, other objects were bestowed as gifts by Islamic dignitaries. Tradition records that a rare, antique turquoise glass bowl of ninth or tenth-century date was given to Venice by the Shah of Persia in 1472 (cat. no. 19). In 1603, an embassy from another King of Persia, Shah Abbas I (reigned 1587–1629), presented Doge Marino Grimani (reigned 1595–1605) with fine silk carpets from Isfahan (see cat. no. 25).

THE GOTHIC TRADITION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF VENETIAN CHURCH SILVER

Although inspired by the grandeur of Byzantium, Venice was open to artistic trends in western Europe. Work in the Romanesque and Gothic styles of the Rhine and Mosan regions of Germany and France were highly influential in Venice in architectural decoration, sculpture, and metalwork. Certainly by the time of the Fourth Crusade at the beginning of the thirteenth century, western European artisans were already familiar in Venice, and by the fourteenth century works of art from various regions of Italy itself—especially Emilia, Tuscany, and Umbria—were making their presence felt in the Veneto. An early fourteenth-century reliquary cross of the best Tuscan work, made of silver-gilt and decorated with enamel, reached the Cathedral of Padua as a gift from the city's bishop, Ildebrandino Conti, in 1339 (cat. no. 27). Fine textiles were imported or received as gifts; one such textile, the beautiful *sciamito dei pappagalli* ('samite of parrots') (cat. no. 51), was originally used as a shroud to wrap the body of Saint Parisio, a Bolognese monk who died in Treviso in 1267. Early Venetian painting in the mid-14th century, as exemplified by two of the finest artists, Paolo Veneziano and Lorenzo Veneziano, show the influence of Byzantine composition but are far closer to the innovative styles of northern Italy (cat. nos 60 and 61).

The great demand from the churches of Venice for metalwork prompted a flourishing of that art in Venice between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Workshops in Venice produced exceptionally fine vessels and other church objects, including crosses, chalices, monstrances, candlesticks, pastoral staffs, altar frontals, and reliquaries. They were usually made of silver-gilt and sometimes decorated with pearls, semiprecious stones, enamel, engraving, or filigree (known in contemporary documents as *opus venetum ad filum*, or 'Venetian filigree', a speciality of Venice).

Many of the objects in this exhibition are products of the Venetian workshops which manufactured fine church silver. Some of the earliest Venetian church silverwork is seen on the large, silver-gilt *Pala d'oro* (gold altar frontal) from the Cathedral of Caorle (cat. no. 31), composed of six large panels representing Christ, the Virgin, angels, prophets, and saints, some of which are in Byzantine style dating from around 1230, while the others are replacements of the later thirteenth century made in a more Western style. Other early examples of Venetian silver include a bookcover thought to date from the late twelfth century decorated with a depiction of the Ascension in Byzantine style (cat. no. 26), a thirteenth-century processional cross, the style of which owes much to Tuscan and Umbrian work, from the Church of San Michele Arcangelo in San Tommaso Agordino, near Belluno (cat. no. 28), and another cross of early fourteenth-century date from the Church of San Raffaele Arcangelo in Venice, which displays Romanesque influence (cat. no. 29).

The fourteenth century saw perhaps the finest, fully confident creations of Venetian silverwork. Preserved in the Treasury of San Marco is a pair of candlesticks, dating from the early fourteenth century, composed of silver-gilt bases with engraved decoration and carved rock crystal stems (cat. no. 20). The shape of these candlesticks may derive from Romanesque examples made of bronze, but by the late thirteenth century Venetian workshops were producing finer versions combining the precious materials of rock crystal and silver, several of which still survive in churches in Italy. Another distinctive workshop operating in the early fourteenth century specialised in reliquaries, creating legs, arms, and other shapes made of silver-gilt with embossed decorative panels (cat. nos 35 to 39): one of these, in the form of a Byzantine crown, provides a date of manufacture, 1321 (cat. no. 35). Only a decade or so later (and certainly before 1338) the Patriarch of Grado, Andrea Dotto, commissioned another Venetian work-

shop to make an elegant reliquary casket ornamented with embossed decorative bands and figures in Gothic style embellished with enamel (cat. no. 33), along with a bookcover (cat. no. 34) with similar decoration bearing the figures of Christ and Saint Hermagoras (the latter appearing as a reminder of Grado's claim to the patriarchate through descent from Saint Mark and his disciple Hermagoras). All that remains of the lost 'Treasure of Saint Vitus' from the Church of San Martino in Marano Lagunare is a pair of silver figurines representing the Virgin holding the Christ Child, and Saint Vitus (cat. no. 42), but the skilful and expressive modelling of the figures demonstrates the quality of workmanship available in Venice in 1362, when the reliquaries on which the figures stood were completed. One of the most remarkable objects in the exhibition is a painted wood cross, sheathed at a later date with embossed silver-gilt showing Christ on a cross richly decorated with vines and florals with added enamel (cat. no. 41). The donor, a woman named Alda Giuliani, is shown praying at the foot of the cross, an inscription providing her name and the date, 1383; the artist, however, remains unknown.

Much of the Venetian church silverwork of the early fifteenth century is in Gothic style, characterised by the use of decoration in the form of elaborate architectural structures comprised of Gothic arches and balustrades inhabited by cast silver figures. The Sesto family workshop in Venice appears to have been the main proponent of this style. A pastoral staff from the Sesto workshop made for the Primates of San Marco around 1420 is ornately decorated with rows of Gothic arches, niches, and balustrades within which are standing soldiers and sitting putti (cat. no. 21). The stem of a chalice from the Church of San Pantalon in Venice is similarly decorated and most likely comes from the same workshop (cat. no. 43). Ever more ornate vessels in the Gothic style continued to be made in Venice throughout the fifteenth century, including another chalice with a stem composed of Gothic architectural details but with the addition of intricately worked vines, among which are placed busts of saints, figures of angels and putti, and even dragons (cat. no. 44). Two objects from the Cathedral of Pordenone also display the ornate Venetian style of the mid-15th century. A monstrance (cat. no. 47) combines a Gothic, lobed base with an architectural stem (with perching dragons) supporting the rock crystal container for the Host, which again takes an architectural form, ornamented with silver-gilt turrets and spires and surmounted by a dome on which stands an angel. A reliquary from Pordenone is even more fantastic, taking the shape of a four-spired Gothic church, the body carved from rock crystal, and the windows, buttresses, niches, and turrets all in silver-gilt (cat. no. 46).

VENICE AND THE ART OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 marked a turning point in the fortunes of Venice. The Republic began to lose its dominance of the eastern Mediterranean trade routes as its protectorates in Greece, Cyprus, and Crete fell one by one to the Turks. At the same time, Portugal was charting new routes to the sources of precious spices in the East Indies, and the discovery of the New World in 1492 meant that Venice's strategic position was no longer essential for European trade. Still, Venice remained prosperous, politically stable, and independent. Although no longer a great military power, the city's prestige and powers of international diplomacy were considerable. Only in the eighteenth century did the old and now decadent political system collapse. The last doge, Lodovico Manin, abdicated in May 1797, unable to withstand the French invasion led by Napoleon Bonaparte.

The loss of Constantinople destroyed a source of inspiration for Venice, but long before 1453 Venetian artists had moved away from the traditions of the Byzantine Empire and toward the Gothic style of Europe. By the mid-15th century the Gothic style itself was in decline, and Venetian church silverwork was no longer so innovative. Very few objects of Venetian manufacture made after the middle of the fifteenth century are preserved in the Treasury of San Marco, suggesting that church patronage had turned its attention to other media.

During the fifteenth century Venice fully embraced the European Renaissance and sought new manners of artistic expression. Churches were no longer ornamented with mosaics and silver-gilt altar frontals, but instead used frescoes and paintings. The great age of Venetian painting, anticipated in the fourteenth century by the artists Paolo Veneziano and Lorenzo Veneziano, blossomed in the fifteenth century with such artists as Jacopo Bellini and his sons Giovanni and Gentile, and achieved prominence in the sixteenth century with such famous painters as Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese, establishing within the city a tradition of producing great painters that endured for another two centuries.

The medieval culture of Venice was inevitably superseded by the city's accomplishments during the Renaissance, but the medieval Church treasures, especially those of the Basilica of San Marco, always remained as a reminder of Venice's illustrious traditions. Venice served not only as a cultural bridge between East and West, but also as the guardian of the traditions of the Roman and Byzantine Empires and inheritor of many of the holiest relics of the early Church. The treasures presented in this exhibition are examples of the rich legacy of that remarkable city.

CATALOGUE ENTRIES

1 | **Jacopo de' Barbari**
View of Venice
Venice, 1500
Woodcut
139 x 282 cm
Museo Correr, Venice

This large and remarkably detailed aerial view of Venice dated 1500 is among the finest achievements of the Renaissance printmaker. The Venetian artist Jacopo de' Barbari laboured on this project for several years with the backing of Anton Kolb, a Nuremberg merchant residing in Venice who had an interest in book publishing. By early 1500, de' Barbari was in Nuremberg working for Emperor Maximilian, but he must have already completed in Venice much of the work for this monumental map, which was printed from woodblocks on six large sheets of specially prepared paper. The map was sold at the time for the large sum of three gold ducats, the price of a fine book.

Kolb and de' Barbari received permission from the Venetian Senate to use the image of the city. No doubt the Venetian authorities considered that the map contributed to the prestige of Venice. De' Barbari too must have felt great pride in his city, and emphasised its stature as a mercantile power. At the top of the map is a figure of Mercury, the patron god of merchants, and the inscription, 'MERCURIUS PRE CETERIS HUIC FAUSTE EMPORIS ILLUSTRO' ('I, Mercury, shine favourably on this city before all other emporia').

Landau and Parshall 1994, pp. 16–17 and 43–6, figs 18–19

2 | **Alvise Bianco**
Winged lion of Saint Mark
Venice, *circa* 1490
Wood with polychrome and gilding
139 x 220 x 68 cm
Museo Correr, Venice

The winged lion is the ancient emblem of Saint Mark, one of four such symbols associated with the four Evangelists, the others being the eagle for Saint John, the bull for Saint Luke, and the angel for Saint Matthew. These are the images described as surrounding the throne of God in the mystic vision of Saint John the Divine: '...and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle' (Revelation 4:6–7).

The winged, nimbate lion carved from wood stands facing left, holding a book inscribed, 'PAX TIBI MARCE EVANGELISTA MEUS' ('Peace be with you, Mark, my evangelist'), according to legend the words spoken by an angel to Saint Mark when he took refuge from a tempest among the islands of the Venetian lagoon. Once painted and gilt, the lion stood in the Basilica of San Marco. A similar lion is preserved in the Museum of the Procuratoria of San Marco. Both are thought to have been carved by the Venetian sculptor Alvise Bianco, with the assistance of the artist Bernardino di Marco, and Maestro Polidoro, who executed the gilding.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco*, no. 2
Ettore Merkel, unpublished notes, 1996

3 **Marble relief: The winged lion of Saint Mark**
Venice, 13th century
Istrian stone
44 x 42 cm
Museo Correr, Venice, inv. no. 1088

The small marble relief shows the emblem of Saint Mark, the forepart of a winged and a nimbate lion, holding the Gospels, over the waves of the Venetian lagoon. Carved vines border the image. The plaque is an unusual example of thirteenth-century Venetian sculpture, and was once placed over the door of the campanile of the Church of Sant' Aponal (Sant' Apollinare) in Venice.

Alberto Rizzi, *Scultura esterna a Venezia* (Venice, 1987), pp. 58–9, fig. 33
Fulvio Zuliani, unpublished notes, 1996

4 | **Theophanes (active 12th century)**
Illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels
Constantinople, *circa* 1150
Mineral pigments and gold leaf on vellum
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,
Felton Bequest

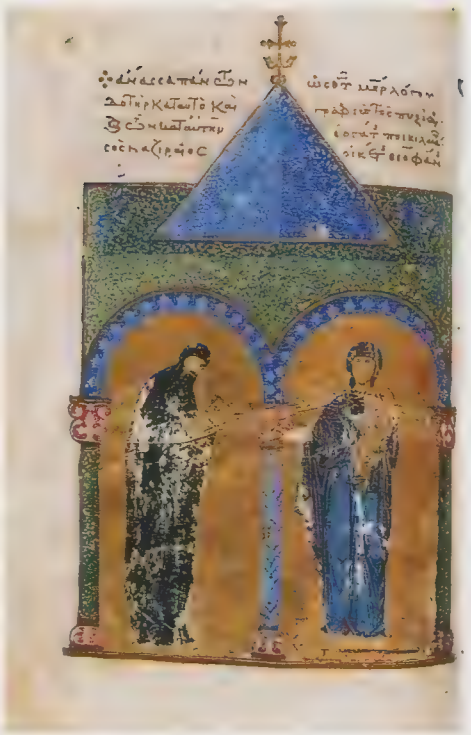
This sumptuous codex contains all four Gospels, as well as the Epistle of Saint Eusebius to Carpianus and canon tables giving the concordance between each Gospel text. In its present form the manuscript is missing the portraits of the Evangelists that by custom would have faced the title page of each book, and one of the canon tables.

The frontispiece to this manuscript is an exceptional example of Byzantine art. It represents the monk Theophanes presenting his manuscript to the Virgin Hodegetria. The accompanying text identifies Theophanes as the scribe, painter, and donor of the work. In effect this makes the image one of the earliest self-portraits in the Western artistic tradition.

Theophanes' choice of the Hodegetria as the recipient of his gift has led scholars to believe that the artist was a monk in the Hodegon Monastery, which was located next to the Imperial Palace at the tip of the promontory of Byzantium. The epithet 'Hodegetria', which means 'the one who shows the way,' refers to an image in which the Virgin is depicted full face in the act of presenting her divine child, who is the 'True Way'. The original, said to have been painted by Saint Luke, was kept in the Hodegon Monastery and was one of the great talismans of Constantinople. Theophanes has changed the format so that the Virgin is depicted extending her arm to him—a gesture that is almost as exceptional in Byzantine iconography as the presence of a self-portrait. This individualistic touch is now considered to be characteristic of the Comnenian Period of the twelfth century, when social pressures stemming from the Crusades brought about an 'outbreak' of self-awareness among the Byzantine cultural elite.

Given Theophanes' outstanding talent, it is unfortunate that the artist-monk cannot be identified from any literary source. However, there may be a clue to the time when he was active within the manuscript itself. A small but beautifully rendered image of the beardless Christ Emmanuel is depicted in the initial letter 'B' of the Gospel of Saint Matthew. This particular image only became popular in the reign of the emperor Manuel Comnenus, who came to the throne in 1144. During Manuel's reign the image of the beardless Emmanuel was introduced onto the Byzantine coinage and used frequently. If this can be taken as a guide, the middle of the twelfth century would be a likely date for the production of the manuscript.

The Gospels are exhibited alongside another (from the Biblioteca Marciana) (cat. no. 5) that probably originated in the same monastic scriptorium. The reasons for this assessment will be discussed in the entry on that work.



Frontispiece: Theophanes presenting his manuscript to the Virgin Hodegetria

Title page for the Gospel of Saint Mark

Buchtal 1961
Galavaris 1995
Manion and Vines 1984

5 | **Illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels**
Constantinople, 12th century
Mineral pigments and gold leaf on vellum
Biblioteca Marciana, Venice

This codex contains the texts of all four Gospels, as well as decorated canon tables. Unlike the Gospels of Theophanes, the book is complete. Facing the title page of each Gospel there is a portrait of each Evangelist beneath a representation of a scene from the life of Christ. The folio illustrated here shows Saint Mark beneath a depiction of the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan. This scene is contained within an archway that rests on richly ornamented columns. The arch itself has a mottled appearance that simulates marble. This type of decoration is characteristic of twelfth–century Byzantine manuscript illumination and is also found in the frontispiece of the Melbourne work (cat. no. 4).

The two sets of Gospels share an illustrative theme involving groups of allegorical figures that appear on the decorative columns which border each of the canon tables. These depict the Labours that symbolise each month of the year, and female figures who represent Virtues that a monk must cultivate as he climbs the spiritual ladder. Only one other Byzantine manuscript—a work now in Tbilisi in Georgia—shares this unusual decorative scheme. It appears to reflect the specific interest of a particular monastic house within Constantinople. If recent scholarly theories about the identity of Theophanes are correct, this Venetian manuscript must also have come from the Hodegon Monastery in Byzantium.

In the Melbourne Gospels, only the Labours for September through to February survive, these being a vintager, a bird-catcher, a tiller, a sower, a man with a boar's head on a dish, and an old man warming his hands before a fire. The Venice manuscript completes the set with a warrior, a shepherd, a flower-bearer, a mower, a thresher, and finally a man quenching his thirst for the month of August. These 'characters' have a very ancient pedigree that goes back to the literature of ancient Greece and Rome.

This manuscript lacks the refinement and variety of decoration that can be found in the Melbourne Theophanes, but the fact that it is complete, as well as its obvious relationship with the Melbourne codex, make it vitally important for the study of twelfth–century manuscript illumination from the Byzantine capital.

Buchtal 1961
Manion and Vines 1984

6 | **Holy water container**
Byzantine, 6th century
Marble
Height: 78 cm
Museo Provinciale, Torcello, inv. no. 654

This holy water container, or stoup (*phiale*, in Greek), carved from marble, is thought to have once stood in the now-destroyed Basilica of SS. Marco e Andrea (Saints Mark and Andrew) on the island of Murano in the Venetian lagoon. Such containers originated in the Greek-speaking part of the Roman Empire in the fourth century and were used to hold the water that was blessed on the Feast of the Epiphany (6th January). In the Eastern Christian tradition, this feast commemorated the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. The stoup would also have been used throughout the year as a vessel in which to baptise infants.

Carved in relief around the rim is a wreath of evergreen ivy, an ancient symbol for life in midwinter. At the base of the bowl is a spout in the shape of a lion's head. Around the body of the vase below the ivy border is an inscription in Greek, commencing with a cross and reading, 'ΑΝΤΛΗCΑΤΑΙ ΥΔΩΡ ΕΥΦΡΟCΥΝΗC ΟΤΙ ΦΩΝΗ Κ[ΥΡΙΟ]Υ ΕΠΙ ΤΩΝ ΥΔΑΤΩΝ' ('Take the water with joy, for the Voice of the Lord is upon the waters'). The inscription is a conflation of texts from Isaiah 12:3 ('Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation'), and Psalms 29:3 ('The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters'). Similar inscriptions appear on other stoups found in the Veneto area, including one in Altino and a fragmentary example in Caorle.

Below this inscription is a cross from which are suspended the Greek letters *alpha* and *omega*, a reference to Christ's statement, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end...' This symbol features prominently in early Christian art. Around the cross is arranged a series of Greek letters that combine to form a monogram, which has not been deciphered conclusively. One plausible reading is, 'of Nicomedia', referring to the prominent city in Asia Minor. Alternatively, the stoup may have been dedicated by a person named Nicomedes. In any event, the workmanship is certainly Byzantine and probably of sixth–century date. It is not known when the container was brought from its Byzantine home to Murano.

Paciaudi 1758, pp. 161–2, pl. 4
Renato Polacco in *Museo di Torcello* 1978, pp. 15–18, no. 6
Ferruccio Zago in *Venezia e Bisanzio* 1974, no. 15

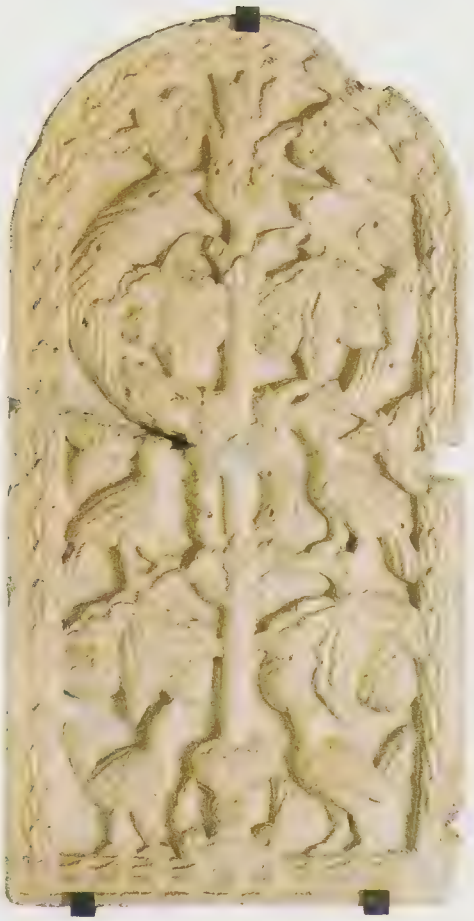
7 | **Stone cross with Latin inscription**
Venice, 13th century
Marble
89 x 79 cm
Museo Provinciale, Torcello, inv. no. 652

The marble cross is thought to have come from the oratorio of San Michele di Zampenigo, a now-destroyed Benedictine monastery on the island of Torcello. The arms of the cross are bordered with a cable pattern, like entwined cord. In the centre is a rosette of fifteen petals, also with a cable border. At the bottom of the cross is a small tree with curling tendrils and stylised leaves.

Each of the arms of the cross is inscribed. From top to bottom it reads, 'IN CRUCE PECCATUM MUNDI PATET ESSE PIATUM' ('By the Cross, the sins of the world are expiated'). The left arm is inscribed, 'IN CRUCE SPEREMUS' ('In the Cross we hope'). The right arm reads, 'CRUCE CRIMINA N[OST]RA LAVEMUS' ('By the Cross we wash away our sins').

The shape of the letters suggest that the cross is of thirteenth–century date and probably of local workmanship.

Renato Polacco in *Museo di Torcello* 1978, pp. 86–7, no. 79



8 | **Stone relief with 'Tree of Life' motif**
Venice, 13th century
Marble
72 x 37.5 cm
Museo Provinciale, Torcello, inv. no. 428

This relief was discovered on the island of Burano in 1883, but is thought to have come originally from Torcello. It was sure to have once decorated a church, but its exact origin is unknown.

From a long cental stalk radiate pairs of branches, stylised leaves and tendrils, and bunches of grapes. Three pairs of birds flank the tree from top to bottom. A wreath of leaves borders the entire composition.

The 'Tree of Life' motif has pagan antecedents, but it became a popular Christian symbol by the fourth century and remained so throughout the Middle Ages. The style of this plaque is influenced by Byzantine models, but the workmanship is Venetian and datable to the early thirteenth century.

Renato Polacco in *Museo di Torcello* 1978, pp. 79–80, no. 68

Grosso *or* matapan *of Doge Enrico Dandolo*

Ducat *of Doge Giovanni Dandolo*

9 | **Selection of Venetian coins**
Venice, 12th – 16th centuries
Gold, silver, copper
Museo Correr, Venice

The minting of coins in Venice dates back to the early ninth century, with the earliest forms being silver *deniers* (derived from the Roman *denarius*) issued in the name of Emperor Louis the Pious (reigned 814–840).

As a series, the coinage of medieval Venice is probably best known for its conservatism. New types appear only rarely, and the designs remained static over generations. This sort of stability only enhanced the value of the currency in the eyes of those who used it. Not surprisingly, the Venetian coinage was widely used and imitated in the eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, stylistic developments did occur, and they tended to mirror the shifts that can be discerned in the work of gold and silversmiths. Thus a *grosso* or *matapan* of Doge Enrico Dandolo (c. 1192) depicts on its obverse (front side) a figure of Christ Enthroned that is so convincingly Byzantine that one would assume it was the work of a Greek die cutter. A golden *ducat* of Doge Giovanni Dandolo one century later (c. 1284) carries a standing figure of Christ within a pointed and starred nimbus that clearly derives from the Gothic art of France.

The ducat was Venice's most famous coin. It took its name from the inscription surrounding the image of the standing Christ on the obverse of the coin, *Sit tibi Christe datus quem tu regis iste ducatus* ('O Christ, let this position of doge over which you reign be consecrated to you'). This coin type became so popular in Europe that the term 'ducat' eventually became synonymous with any gold coin. Its alternative name of *zecchino*, from the Italian word for a mint, came into English as 'sequin'. Curiously enough, it seems also to survive in the word 'zack'—an old Australian term for a sixpence. The reverse side of the ducat showed the doge kneeling in homage before Saint Mark. The design was retained right up to the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1798.

The coins in this exhibition represent all the major types introduced between 1100 and 1500, and have also been chosen to represent some of the doges who are renowned in the annals of Venetian history.

Papadopoli 1893

10 | **Alberto Prosdocimi**
Views of the facade and interior of the Basilica of San Marco
Venice, *circa* 1885–1887
Watercolour
Facade: 176 x 241 cm. Interior: 176 x 243 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

These two large watercolours reproduce with near-photographic accuracy views of the main facade of the Basilica—with its domes, pinnacle, Gothic tracery, arches, sculptural decorations and mosaics—and the interior within the principal entrance, affording views of the north-south transept with details of the mosaics, the stone pavements, the columns and capitals, and the iconostasis.

The watercolours were commissioned by the publisher Ferdinando Ongania from the Venetian artist Alberto Prosdocimi between 1885 and 1887. They are among the views of the Basilica and its details which were made in preparation for chromolithographs for the sumptuous publication *La Basilica di San Marco in Venezia illustrate nella storia e nell'arte da scrittori Veneziani sotto la direzione di C. Boito*, of which five hundred copies appeared between 1888 and 1892. The high costs of the publication forced Ongania to seek financial aid from the Procuratoria of San Marco, which in 1892 purchased drawings, paintings and photographic negatives associated with the publication.

Maria Da Villa Urbani, unpublished notes, 1996

11 | **Head of an emperor**
Probably Constantinople, 6th century
Egyptian porphyry
Height: 40 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

The facade of the Basilica of San Marco is itself a treasury of the sculpture of earlier empires. This head was once built into the balustrade at the southwest corner of the terrace of the Basilica. Venetian popular tradition identified the head as a portrait of the fifteenth–century *condottiere* Carmagnola, who was beheaded in the nearby Piazzetta in 1432, but in fact it is an imperial portrait of the late Roman Empire.

The head is carved from porphyry, an extremely hard, purple-coloured stone quarried from an isolated mountain in the eastern desert of Egypt, greatly prized in the ancient world and reserved for imperial use. The material was used in the late Roman and early Byzantine

period for imperial statues, including the well-known group dating from the late third century known as the Tetrarchs, which stands at the southern facade of the Basilica.

Although some scholars have argued for a later date, the head most likely belongs to the first half of the sixth century and may portray the Byzantine emperor Justinian I. The portrait recalls the depiction of Justinian in the mosaic decoration of the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna, where the emperor exhibits the same pursed, full lips, arched eyebrows, and a jewelled diadem of similar structure to the one on the porphyry head.

Recent archaeological work in Istanbul has proven the Byzantine provenance of the Tetrarchs, as well as that of the so-called Pilasters of Acre that stand beside them in the Piazzetta. It is likely that this head too came to Venice from Constantinople during the turbulent period of the Latin Empire (1204–1261), when the Doge of Venice held the title of 'Lord of three-eighths of the Empire of Romania.' Only during this period would the Venetians have had the power to remove so much stonework from the old imperial capital.

G. Tigler in Demus 1995, pp. 226–7, no. 230
J. Breckenridge in *Age of Spirituality* 1979, p. 7, fig. 6

12 | Ciborium with Greek inscription
Constantinople, 6th century
Marble
63 x 43 x 44.5 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

Carved from a single block of marble, four Corinthian columns support arches on which rests a low hemispherical dome. The columns at the rear are shorter and rest upon a ledge that extends beyond the bottom edge of the base, suggesting that this object was joined at the back to some other architectural element. Two of the arches bear an elegantly carved inscription naming the original donor, which reads in Greek: 'ΥΠΕΡ ΕΥΧΗC K[AI] CΩTHPIAC THC ENΔOΞOTATHC ANACTACIAC' ('In fulfilment of a vow and for the salvation of the most glorious Anastasia').

This object most likely functioned as a *ciborium*, or canopy that sheltered either the Eucharist, the Gospels, or possibly even a reliquary. Inside the dome there is a central pierced projection from which an object could be suspended, perhaps a cross or a small figure of a dove, symbolising the Holy Spirit.

The columns themselves, particularly the capitals, display features that have close links to ivory carvings of sixth–century date. The multiple moulding around the base of each column is also a fifth or sixth–century feature. The placement of the inscription on the arches finds parallels on the entablatures of the balustrades of two sixth–century buildings in Constantinople, the ruined Church of Saint Polyeuktos, and the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, which bears an inscription commemorating Justinian and Theodora.

The identity of the Anastasia named in the inscription remains uncertain, but the epithet 'most glorious' indicates that she was of patrician rank. A woman of high rank by the name of Anastasia is attested at the court of Emperor Justinian in 558, but the name, which refers to the Resurrection, has always been popular in the Orthodox world.

Like several other pieces in the exhibition, the presence of this ciborium in Saint Mark's is witness to the fascination of medieval Venice with the art of the Byzantine Empire. Possession of objects like this one gave Venice a tangible link with the older civilisation, and with that link came all the prestige that was associated with a political entity that still regarded itself as the legitimate continuation of the Roman Empire.

The object itself came from one of the upper rooms within the Basilica and was transferred to the Treasury in 1885.

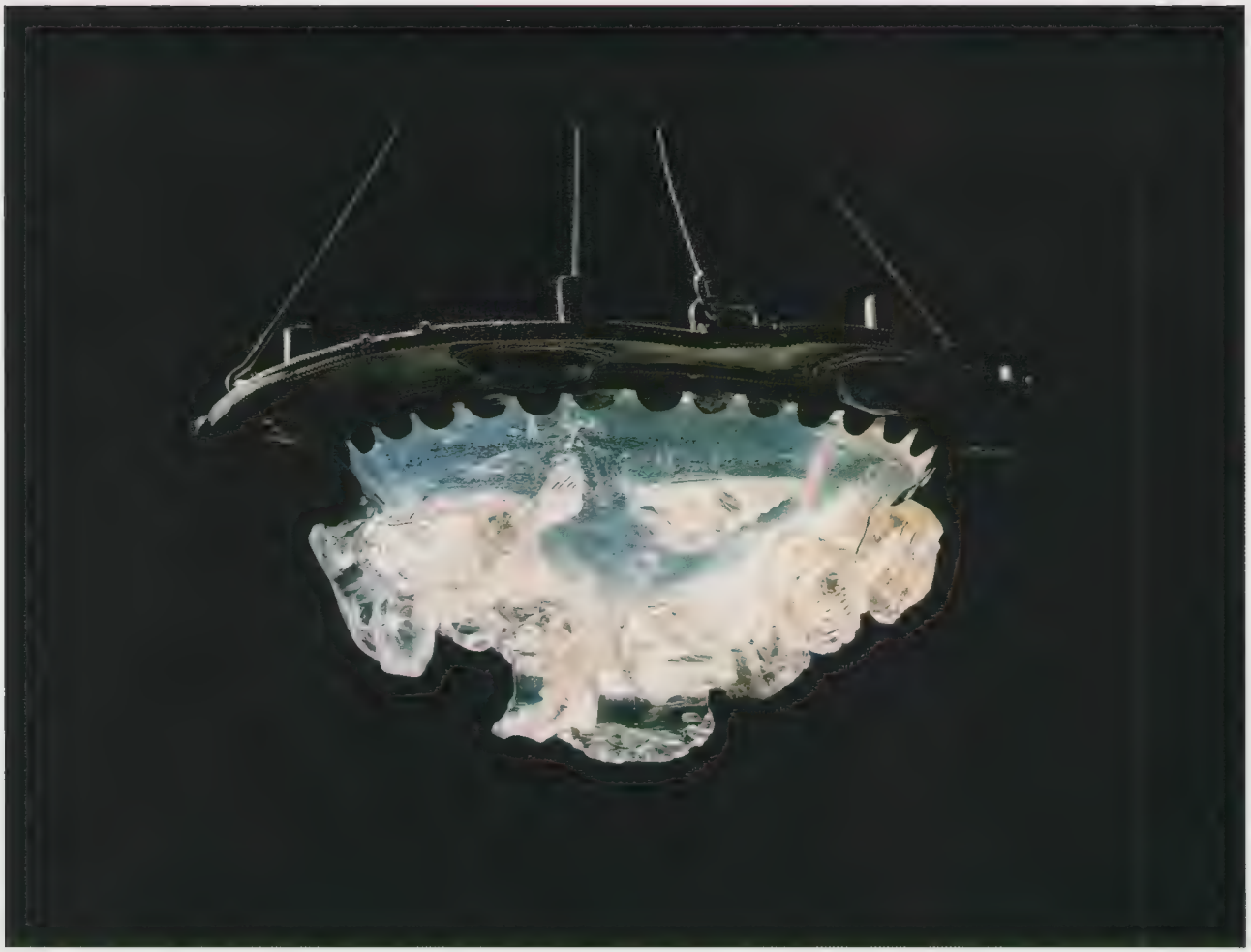
Danielle Gaborit-Chopin in *Treasury* 1984, no. 6
W. F. Volbach in Hahnloser 1971, no. 9

13 | **Bowl with one handle**
5th – 7th century
Sardonyx
15 x 28 x 21 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This bowl, carved from a single block of sardonyx (banded agate), is exceptionally large, weighing over two kilograms and measuring nine millimetres thick at the rim. The cup now has one handle, giving it the appearance of a massive teacup, but originally it probably had a second handle. A sixteenth–century inventory describes the bowl as having a silver-gilt mount with two handles, but the mount was removed sometime after 1816 (the mount is last mentioned in an inventory of that year), leaving only the four holes pierced in the rim.

The carving of sardonyx vessels was practised throughout Roman times and on into the early Byzantine period. The comparatively less-refined workmanship of this bowl has led scholars to assign it a relatively late date of manufacture.

Daniel Alcouffe in *Treasury* 1984, no. 4
A. Grabar in Hahnloser 1971, no. 90



14 **Hanging lamp with marine life**
Stonework: 4th century
Metalwork: Byzantine, 10th – 12th century
Rock crystal, silver-gilt, glass
6.2 x 21.1 x 17.8 cm (with mount)
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

The oval bowl, carved from a single piece of rock crystal, displays fish, shells, and crabs (or possibly jellyfish) cut to a degree that the animals are seen almost in the round. Three damaged motifs may have served as feet. The bowl is thought to date from the fourth century and to derive from a late Roman workshop. It was incorporated into a metal mount of 10th – 12th century date, probably by a craftsman in Constantinople, for use as a lamp. The practice of 'recycling' precious objects was common in the Middle Ages, and there are several other products of this practice in this exhibition.

The silver mount comprises a circular band with tongues around its inner edge which grasp the rim of the bowl. Beaded wire extends around the band on both its upper and lower surfaces and on its inner and outer edges. This beading also surrounds six plain mounts for cabochons on the underside of the band. Only one of these settings is still complete, containing a piece of deep blue glass. The upper side of the mount has eight cylindrical holders for tapers, and four loops, which enable it to be suspended.

Surprisingly for such a distinctive item, it is not mentioned in inventories of the Treasury before 1801, though it must have been brought to Venice many centuries earlier.

Daniel Alcouffe in *Treasury* 1984, no. 2
W. F. Volbach in Hahnloser 1971, no. 8

15 | **Chalice of the Patriarchs**
Constantinople, 10th – early 11th century
Sardonyx, silver-gilt, enamel, semiprecious stones, pearls
27.3 x 18 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This extraordinarily fine vessel is undoubtedly the product of an imperial workshop in Constantinople. The distinctive shape of the hemispherical sardonyx bowl with flat bottom suggests that it was intended as a chalice and cut specifically for this mount. The silver-gilt mount is composed of a rim bearing a blue enamel inscription in Greek, joined by four hinged straps to a lower band, set with eight red stones, at the base of the bowl. The bowl of the chalice is joined to its splayed, conical foot by a flattened, spherical knop. Enamel medallions and panels are set in the vertical straps and the foot, and another enamel medallion depicting Christ blessing is set inside the sardonyx bowl. All of these elements are bordered by silver-gilt beading and some by strung pearls.

The enamel inscription around the rim translates from the Greek as Christ's Eucharistic exhortation, 'Drink ye, all of this, this is my blood of the new covenant that was shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.' On the four vertical bands are enamel medallions containing images of the soldier saints Demetrius, Procopius, Theodore and Akydinus. The straps are also ornamented with enamel rosettes and palmettes. Around the foot are two more bands decorated with rosettes in enamel, and between these bands are four trapezoidal panels in enamel with busts of Saints Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Ignatius the Younger (a ninth–century supporter of religious art), and Theophylact of Nicomedia (Bishop of Nicomedia, 800–845, and like Ignatius an opponent of Iconoclasm). The first three served as Patriarch of Constantinople, and it is from them that the name of the chalice derives.

It has been suggested that the addition of the figure of the youthful Saint Theophylact on the foot of the chalice alludes to his namesake, the son of Emperor Romanus I (reigned 919–944), who was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople in 933 at the age of fourteen. Around this time a chapel dedicated to this saint was set up in the Great Palace at Constantinople. The style of the enamels, however, suggests a slightly later date of manufacture, probably late in the tenth century or early in the eleventh century. Nevertheless, the chalice may well have been used in the Chapel of Saint Theophylact in Constantinople.

The chalice was most likely brought to Venice in the thirteenth century and is listed in the 1325 inventory of the Treasury of San Marco.

Daniel Alcouffe and Margaret E. Frazer in *Treasury* 1984, no. 16
A. Grabar in Hahnloser 1971, no. 40
Rice 1959, pp. 70–71 and 322, fig. 139
Wessel 1967, p. 72, no. 20

Front cover

16 | **Bookcover with the Crucifixion and the Virgin *orans***
Byzantine, 9th – early 10th century
Silver-gilt over a wood core, gold cloisonné enamel, pearls, glass
Front cover, back cover: 26 x 17.5 cm
Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, ms. Lat. C1. I, 101

This bookcover, which contains a ninth–century lectionary once used in San Marco, is comprised of two panels of silver-gilt joined by hinged straps. Both the front and back panels share a common decorative design. A figure in a cross-shaped element of cloisonné enamel is placed in the centre of a gold field and bordered by strung pearls. The central element is surrounded by ten medallions in cloisonné enamel, each of which in turn is also bordered with strung pearls. This inner field, too, has a border of pearls edged on either side with silver-gilt beading. A further broad border is composed of metal cells in a complex pattern of interwoven Greek crosses filled with deep green, blue, and red glass pieces, many of which are now lost. There is a final border of strung pearls edged with silver-gilt beading. On both panels the surface is given a unity by the colour of the glass plaques in the border matching the enamels in the central crosses. The opulent effect is emphasised by the dramatic switch from complex border to simple gold field.

The front cover presents an image of the crucified Christ wearing a long sleeveless tunic called a *colobium*. The medallions on the front read as follows, from the top left: Saints Peter, John the Baptist, and Andrew, two archangels, Saint Mark, another archangel, a floral orna-

Back cover

ment (which is a later replacement), and Saints Matthew and James. It is likely that the medallion depicting Saint Mark originally occupied the bottom left roundel and that a fourth archangel would have been placed in the space at the lower left of the cross. The four angels surrounding the cross would have represented the angelic powers of Dominion, Power, Sovereignty and Strength that were believed to sing in the presence of God.

The back cover is dominated by the figure of the Orant (praying) Virgin wearing a deep blue *maphorion*, or cowled robe. On this side only three medallions remain, and one of these, the image of Saint Procopius, in the top centre, is clearly not part of the original design, as it is different in both style and technique. The two surviving original medallions, to the left and right of the Virgin's head, depict Saints John and Phillip.

The cross-shaped enamel with the Virgin also contains four roundels of blue enamel with cloisonné inscriptions in the form of Greek monograms, which can be read as, 'Mother of God, help your servant, the Magistrissa Maria.' A woman of this name and rank is recorded as having been cured by the Virgin of the Spring—a famous icon in a monastery just outside the walls of Constantinople—around the year 900, and it is possible that this cover is a votive offering from her, although this cannot be confirmed. However, the enamels of the bookcover are very similar to those found on a votive crown, now in the Treasury of San Marco, thought to have been commissioned by the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (reigned 886–912). Given such a close parallel with this object, the cover must date to the late ninth or early tenth century.

The bookcover is recorded in the 1325 inventory of the Treasury of San Marco, but whether the object arrived as booty or as a gift is not noted.

Margaret E. Frazer in *Treasury* 1984, no. 9
A. Grabar in Hahnloser 1971, no. 35
Grabar 1958, pp. 168–71
Rice 1959, p. 72, no. 91
Beckwith 1970, p. 92, fig. 167

Front cover

17 | **Bookcover with the Crucifixion and Anastasis**
Byzantine, 14th century
Silver-gilt over a wood core, cloisonné and champlevé enamel
Front cover, back cover: 30 x 22 cm
Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Cl. Gr. I, 53

The bookcover is composed of two silver-gilt sheets fastened onto a wooden core and has been used to house a Greek lectionary of the mid–15th century. Both sides portray scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin executed in repoussé relief alternating with cloisonné enamel medallions set against a champlevé enamel background. Each panel is labelled with an inscription in Greek.

On the front cover, the central relief panel shows the Crucifixion, with the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist flanking the cross. Above the cross are two attendant angels. The inscriptions name the Crucifixion and include Christ's exhortations, 'Woman, behold thy son,' and 'Behold thy mother.' Surrounding the central panel are smaller panels, including scenes of the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Baptism of Christ, the

Back cover

Presentation in the Temple, the Transfiguration, and the Raising of Lazarus. The enamel medallions, which are set amid a pattern of entwined tendrils, include the Archangel Michael, Saints Basil, Nicholas and John Chrysostom, and the Prophets Daniel and Moses.

The back cover displays a similar format. The central panel portrays the Anastasis—the Harrowing of Hell, where Christ is depicted releasing Adam from the grave, the traditional Orthodox representation of the Resurrection. The relief panels surrounding the central scene show the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the Ascension, the Dormition of the Virgin, the Pentecost, the Presentation of the Virgin by Joachim and Anna, and the Deposition of Christ. The enamel plaques commence at the top with the Hetimasia, the symbolic representation of the Throne of God prepared for the Day of Judgement. Then follow busts of King Solomon, Saint George, King David, Saint Gregory Nazianzen, and Saint Demetrius.

The enamel medallions are not in their original scheme, which would have shown the Doctors of the Church and the soldier saints on one side and the Old Testament prophets and kings with the Prepared Throne and the Angel of the Apocalypse on the reverse. Despite this rearrangement, the theme emphasising Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Covenant and the key to redemption is strongly communicated.

Margaret E. Frazer in *Treasury* 1984, no. 20
A. Grabar in Hahnloser 1971, no. 38
Wessel 1967, pp. 196-200

Front cover (right hand side) and back cover (left hand side)

18 | **Bookcover with the Crucifixion and Anastasis**
Constantinople or Venice, 14th – 15th century
Silver-gilt
Front cover, back cover: 33 x 20.5 cm
Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Cl. Gr. I, 55

Comprising two panels of silver-gilt, this bookcover houses a Greek manuscript of the eleventh century. The central panel of the front cover is a depiction of the Crucifixion, with the Virgin and Saint John flanking the cross and two angels flying above. The border is composed of panels of embossed patterns of florals and interwoven lacework alternating with busts of apostles, saints, and angels. The apostles are labelled, in Greek, John the Theologian, Matthew, Peter, Andrew, James, Paul, Bartholomew, Philip, Luke, Mark, and Simon. Two saints are labelled Hipatius and Athanasius. The archangels are named as Michael and Gabriel. At the top is a panel depicting the Hetimasia, or the Prepared Throne of God awaiting the Day of Judgement.

The central image of the back cover is the Anastasis, or Harrowing of Hell by Christ. In this version, the triumphant Christ is raising both Adam and Eve from their tombs, while a crowd of prophets and kings looks on. The embossed panels that border the central scene are identical in arrangement to those of the front side. Again, the top panel is the Hetimasia, and there are busts of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. Below the central panel are busts of Saints George and Demetrius. In the outer border are busts of other saints and prophets: Kings David and Solomon, Elias, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Saints John Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Nicholas.

The iconography of this work emphasises the Redemption through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The combination of Old Testament sages and Doctors of the Church argues for Christ as the summation of the Covenant.

This bookcover is more ornate than the previous example in this exhibition (cat. no. 17), and lacks added enamel, but the working of the figures is less assured. Numerous spelling errors in the inscriptions suggest that the craftsman may not have been Greek. However, the work is highly Byzantine in style, and the interwoven lacework patterns have parallels in the silver borders of some icons and reliquaries from Greece and Serbia datable to the fourteenth century.

A. Grabar in Hahnloser 1971, no. 39

19 **Turquoise glass bowl**
Glass: Iran or Iraq, 9th – 10th century
Enamel: Constantinople, 11th century
Metalwork: Constantinople, late 10th century, and Venice (?15th century)
Glass, gold, silver-gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, semiprecious stones
Height: 6 cm. Maximum diameter: 18.6 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This opaque, turquoise-coloured glass bowl is of a shape composed of five lobes and a ring foot. Each of the lobes displays a figure of a stylised running hare within a linear border. According to Venetian tradition, the bowl was a gift to the *Signoria* of Venice from the Shah of Persia in 1472. The bowl itself, however, is much earlier in date and is one of the finest surviving examples of cut glass from the early Islamic period. Fragments of glass bowls of similar workmanship, thought to date from the time of the Abbasid Caliphate in the ninth or tenth century, have been found at Samarra in Iraq and at Nishapur in Iran.

The metalwork appears to be fundamentally a Venetian production of the fifteenth century, which incorporates older, reused Byzantine enamels and goldwork. The exterior band around the rim comprises one Byzantine enamel panel for each lobe, decorated with rosettes and quatrefoils and flanked by Venetian filigree panels of rectangular shape, each of which is set with seven semiprecious stones. The interior of the band around the rim is composed of five gold plaques engraved with an elaborate floral pattern of Byzantine workmanship, most likely of tenth–century date.

Carolyn Kane and Margaret E. Frazer in *Treasury* 1984, no. 29
Kurt Erdmann in Hahnloser 1971, no. 117

20 **Pair of rock crystal candlesticks**
Venice, early 14th century
Rock crystal, silver-gilt
Height: 59 and 60 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This pair of rock crystal and silver-gilt candlesticks presents a good example of the fine stonework and metalwork executed in Venice at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The stem of each candlestick is composed of faceted rock crystal beads strung on a copper rod. The beads are of two alternating shapes—spheres (four) and lozenges (three)—which reduce slightly in size from bottom to top. Each bead is separated from the next by a ring of silver ornamented with pointed leaves. At the bottom of the stem, a hemispherical rock crystal element joins the silver-gilt base. At the apex of each shaft is a conical element, one of rock crystal and the other of glass, which joins the base of the candle holder.

The base of each candlestick is of silver, once gilded, though only traces of gold now remain. The triangular, lobed base rests on three elements in the shape of standing lion protomes. Each side of the base is further subdivided into three compartments by a strand of beaded wire. These compartments are engraved with patterns of florals inhabited by an assortment of birds, lionesses, and dragons.

Three pairs of rock crystal candlesticks, one of which is probably this item, are listed in the 1325 inventory of the Treasury of San Marco. Other rock crystal and silver candlesticks of similar manufacture and late 13th – early 14th century date are preserved in churches else-

where in Italy, and are also thought to be of Venetian origin. The art of carving rock crystal was established in Venice by 1284, when a crystal-carvers guild is first recorded. The shape of the candlesticks, however, goes back to northwest European prototypes in metal in Romanesque style. In the San Marco candlesticks, one can see once again the blending of styles that is such a characteristic of medieval Venetian workmanship.

Daniel Alcouffe and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin in *Treasury* 1984, nos. 35–6
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, nos. 149–52

21 **Pastoral staff**
Venice, *circa* 1420
Silver and silver-gilt over a wood core
Length: 194 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

The pastoral staff, or crozier, is derived from the simple crook of a shepherd, and was carried by bishops, abbots, and other prelates as a symbol of their pastoral duties. This particular staff was used by the Primates of San Marco and is now used by the Patriarch of Venice on important holy days.

The octagonal staff is covered with silver and silver-gilt sections engraved with leaf patterns. The elaborate, Gothic-style knob and crook are composed of a series of zones with architectural motifs. At the bottom, a balustrade supports six volutes. Above this element sits a group of cherubs, and above these cherubs is a series of eight niches, each of which houses an armoured figure. The next zone is also inhabited by a group of standing men in armour, this time beneath a crown of Gothic tracery, which acts as a ring around a circular balustrade. This ring joins the crook, which is composed of a series of curved, foliate elements inserted into each other. At the centre of the curl stands a cast figure of Saint Mark, with a lion at his feet.

The elaborate style of the metalwork is distinctive and very likely derives from the Sesto family workshop in Venice, which produced church objects in the early fifteenth century. Although there has been some debate over whether the crook section is original, its style and technique are closely related to other material made in the Sesto workshop.

William D. Wixom in *Treasury* 1984, no. 47
E. Steingraber in Hahnloser 1971, no. 176

Front cover

22 | **Bookcover for the Gospel of Saint Mark**
Aquileia, between 1319 and 1332
Silver-gilt
Front cover, back cover: 32.2 x 27.2 cm
Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice,
inv. no. 151

The bookcover was commissioned from a workshop in Aquileia between 1319 and 1332 by the Patriarch of Aquileia, Bishop Pagano della Torre, whose emblem, the tower, is displayed prominently on the back cover. The cover once housed one of the most important holy relics of Aquileia, a sixth–century Latin manuscript of the Gospel of Saint Mark, which popular tradition held was the Apostle's own autographed copy. Possession of such a relic would have given Aquileia great prestige.

The imagery of the bookcover argues for the Church of Aquileia's claim to be the true successor of Saint Mark. On the front cover, Saint Peter, enthroned as Prince of the Apostles, commands Saint Mark to write the Gospel. The coat of arms, the eagle, represents Aquileia (*aquila* in Latin). The back cover depicts a conventional Crucifixion scene, beneath which Saint Mark is seen seated, writing the Gospel. To the right, Saint Mark is again shown, this time as a bishop,

Back cover

supporting his disciple, Hermagoras, who kneels before Saint Peter and receives the pastoral staff. Through Hermagoras, the See of Aquileia claimed direct descent from Saint Mark with the blessing of Saint Peter.

Aquileia was the archrival of Venice, both in politics and religion. Venice gave its spiritual alliance to the Patriarch of Grado rather than Aquileia and opposed the influence of the German Emperor, to whom Aquileia owed political allegiance. In a great political victory, this holy relic came to Venice in 1418 as spoils of war in a direct military conflict with Aquileia.

The Gospel manuscript once contained in the book-cover no longer survives, having decayed in the dampness of Venice. Only a few pages, detached as gifts in the fourteenth century, are preserved in European libraries.

Hermann Fillitz in *Omaggio* 1994, no. 5
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, no. 151
Carlo Gaberscek in *Ori e tesori* 1992, pp. 118–19, no. IV.4

23 **Rapier of Doge Francesco Morosini**
Rome, 1689
Steel with silver-gilt sheath and hilt
Length (excluding the hilt): 169 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This parade sword, executed in the finest Roman Baroque style, was a gift from Pope Alexander VIII Ottoboni (reigned 1689–1691) to the Venetian doge Francesco Morosini (reigned 1688–1694). The papal custom of presenting ceremonial swords to foreign dignitaries was an ancient one, and several other swords of fifteenth and sixteenth-century date presented to doges are still preserved in Venice and elsewhere.

The steel blade is decorated with engraved patterns of leaves and florals, the papal tiara and coat of arms, and the inscriptions, 'ALEXANDER VIII PON[TIFEX] MAX[IMUS]', and 'PONTIFICATUS SUI ANNO I' ('In the first year of the Pope'), indicating that the sword was made in the year 1689. The sword's sheath is of cast and embossed openwork silver-gilt on a red velvet background. The highly ornate pattern is of curling leaves enclosing military trophies and papal insignia. One putto clings to the bottom of the sheath, and two others at the top support the papal coat of arms. The hilt itself is an imaginative, sculptural creation of curling volutes, leaves, and twisted ribbons. The cast, silver-gilt construction bears two flying putti who grasp the base of the handle, and an elaborate pommel in the form of the Ottoboni coat of arms, held by two more putti. The sword is furnished with a belt of crimson fabric embroidered with gold thread, and the buckle is of cast silver, decorated with the papal arms.

The name of neither the maker of the blade nor the Roman goldsmith responsible for the remarkable silverwork is known.

Giovanni Mariacher in Hahnloser 1971, no. 258

24 **Graduals**
Venice, 1567–1568
Painted vellum
64.2 x 47.2 cm; 67.5 x 48 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice, inv. nos 19 and 20

In 1566, the Procurators of the Basilica of San Marco commissioned a luxurious edition of all the choral music sung at Mass throughout the year. Such choir books are known as *graduals*. The San Marco edition is bound in four volumes, three devoted to the cycle of the annual liturgy and one to the feast days of the saints. Two of the four volumes are exhibited here, both being the work of the copyist Ventura da Venezia (also known as Vittorino or Venturino), who signed and dated the first volume in December, 1567.

In addition to Vittorino, the artist Giovan Battista da Udine was employed to provide illustrations at the heads of some pages. Some of these miniatures depict episodes in the Bible or the lives of the saints, and others are ornamented initial letters. The miniature illustrated here shows the *Translation of Saint Mark* (who is shown as a living saint carried from a ship by bishops) above an elaborately decorated letter 'O'.

I Libri di San Marco 1995, pp. 142–6, nos 50 and 53

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25 | **Carpet**
Isfahan, Iran, *circa* 1600
Silk embroidered with silver thread
183 x 259 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

The carpet uses designs from the Isfahan and Herat regions of Persia. The pattern is a central rectangle containing ribbon-shaped stems of silver brocade from which spiral, lance-shaped leaves extend. Along the shoots are florals, rosettes, 'shields', and arabesques. A thin border around the central panel is decorated with a long stem on blue ground, and on the outside edge a similar floral motif is on green ground. Between these borders is a band of two entwined shoots from which spring buds, leaves, rosettes and arabesques. Colours include cream, yellow, red, grey, and various shades of green and blue. There is a striking juxtaposition of vivid blues and reds with pastels. There was considerable use of silver brocade, but much of the silver is now lost. Some losses in the carpet have been repaired in yellow silk.

In 1603, an official delegation from the king of Persia, Shah Abbas (reigned 1587–1629), headed by his ambassador, Fethi Bey, presented Doge Marino Grimani (reigned 1595–1605) with various gifts, including this carpet, which the ambassador extolled as one of the most beautiful in the world.

Kurt Erdmann in Hahnloser 1971, no. 133
Giovanni Curatola, unpublished notes, 1996

26 **Bookcover depicting the Ascension**
?Venice, late 12th century
Silver-gilt
40.7 x 30.8 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Gorizia

This very-damaged silver-gilt plaque served as a book-cover for the Gospels. The scene is the Ascension, where the resurrected Christ appears to his mother and the Apostles in glory. Christ is seated within a pointed nimbus supported by two angels. The Virgin stands below and around her stand the Apostles, gesturing in awe. The border of embossed tendrils appears to be a later addition.

The date and origin of the plaque are difficult to determine, since no closely similar object survives. The depiction of the Ascension is Byzantine in composition, but the style appears Western. A similar version of the scene appears in a mosaic of around 1200 in the Basilica of San Marco. The plaque is most likely a Venetian work of the late twelfth century.

The bookcover was formerly in the Cathedral Treasury of Aquileia, but after the suppression of the Patriarchate of Aquileia by the Pope in 1753, the objects in the Treasury were divided between Udine and Gorizia.

Franz Kirchweger in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 79
Sergio Tavano in *Ori e tesori* 1992, pp. 116–17, no. IV.3

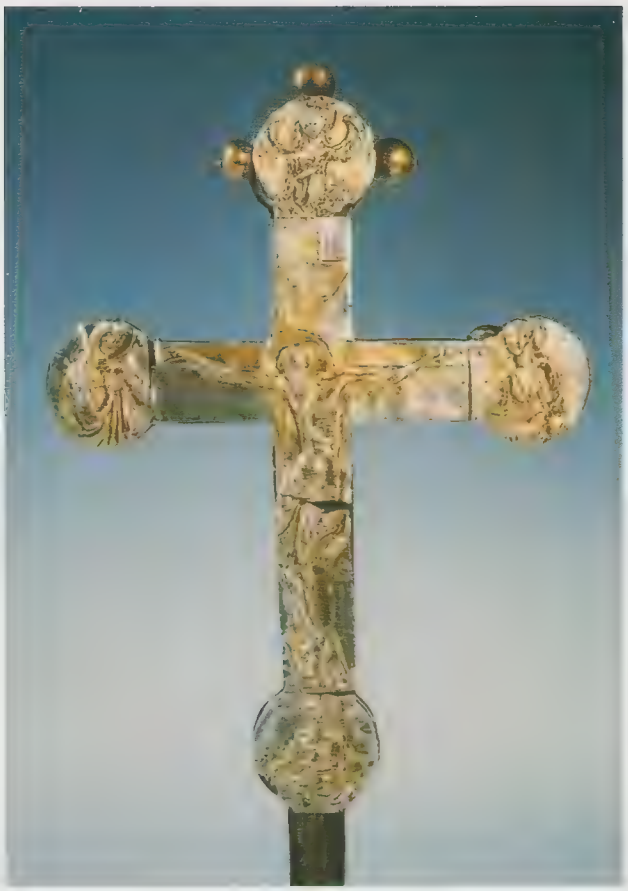
27 **Reliquary of the Holy Cross of Ildebrandino Conti**
Tuscan (?Siena), early 14th century (before 1312)
Silver-gilt, enamel
Height: 55 cm
Sacristy of the Cathedral, Padua

This silver-gilt cross, which stands on a square base, also serves as a reliquary, holding a fragment of wood believed to have come from the Holy Cross. The reliquary appears to be a collaborative effort by several goldsmiths, and two of the finest Tuscan artists of the period, Guccio de Mannaia and Goro di Gregorio, have been suggested by modern scholars as the possible craftsmen. The square base, with four rounded lobes, rests on four lion's feet. A knop in the shape of a four-sided Gothic structure of tall, mullioned windows in which are engraved figures of prophets supports a square element, once decorated with enamel, and above this are placed two arms on which stand cast statuettes of the Virgin and Saint John. The cross itself, which bears a cast figure of Christ, is richly decorated with engraved florals and birds. Four enamelled plaquettes appear on the front of the cross: the Archangel Michael at the top, the Virgin and Saint John to the left and right, and the Lamb of God in the centre.

At the feet of Christ is a cross-shaped compartment which holds the relic of the Holy Cross; the inscription reads, 'LIG[NUM] S[AN]C[T]E CRUCIS' ('Wood of the Holy Cross'). On the back of the cross are medallions with the symbols of the four Evangelists: the lion, eagle, bull and angel. Covering the back of the reliquary compartment is a plaquette of the dead Christ, but this appears to be a later, fifteenth-century addition.

The reliquary cross formed part of a donation to the Cathedral of Padua by the city's bishop, Ildebrandino Conti, in 1339. Conti, who was an influential figure in the papal court in Avignon and a friend of Francesco Petrarch, received the cross from his relative, Giovanni Poli, the Bishop of Pisa, who died in 1312.

Anna Maria Spiazzi in *Restituzioni* 1993, pp. 36–9
E. Cioni Liserani in *Il Gotico a Siena* 1982, pp. 104–8, no. 31



28 **Processional cross**
Venice, late 13th century
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 34.5 cm
Church of San Michele Arcangelo, San Tommaso Agordino (near Belluno)

This is an early example of a processional cross from the Veneto region. Recently restored, it is composed of embossed silver, partly gilt, over a wood core. The front side displays a central figure of Christ on the cross, a bust of the Archangel Michael above, busts of the Virgin and Saint John on the left and right, and Abraham at the foot of the cross. The back of the cross is decorated with an enthroned Virgin and Child, and in the four arms are the symbols of the four Evangelists—the eagle of Saint John, the lion of Saint Mark, the bull representing Saint Luke, and the angel as symbol of Saint Matthew.

The iconographical composition is typical of processional crosses in Italy in the thirteenth century, including the painted cross in the Cathedral of Padua dated 1228. The style owes much to works in Tuscany and Umbria, and there appears to be minimal direct Byzantine influence, except for the enthroned Virgin and Child on the reverse, where the figures have the same hieratic quality that can be discerned in the figures of Gabriel and the Virgin on the *pala d'oro* of Caorle (see cat. no. 31).

Anna Maria Spiazzi in *Restituzioni* 1992, pp. 21–2

29 | **Processional cross**
Venice, early 14th century
Silver over a wood core
99 x 55 cm
Church of San Raffaele Arcangelo, Venice

This cross, an early Venetian work in Gothic style, is composed of two sheets of embossed silver nailed to a wood core, and stands on a simple sphere with a horizontal band, below which is the tubular shaft into which a staff was inserted. The front side bears a figure of the crucified Christ in high relief. The terminals of the arms are of multilobed shape and contain embossed images. At the foot of the cross is a depiction of the Annunciation. To the left and right are busts of the Virgin and Saint John, and at the top is a bust of an angel. On the back of the cross is a portrayal of the Ascension: Christ sits enthroned within a pointed nimbus held by flying angels. Below is a figure of the standing Virgin. The four terminals of the cross contain the symbols of the four Evangelists.

Giovanni Mariacher in *Arte a Venezia* 1971, p. 224, no. 108
Annalisa Perissa Torrini, unpublished notes, 1996

30 | **Pastoral staff**
Treviso, late 13th – early 14th century
Painted ivory, bone, wood
Height of crook: 57.5 cm
Height of staff: 91.5 cm
Museo Diocesano, Treviso

Throughout the medieval period, ivory was a highly valued material used for objects of great ceremonial importance. This pastoral staff is of very fine quality and technical achievement. It is composed of several joining pieces. The curved crook is carved from a single piece of ivory, with added red and black paint and some gilding. The crook is inserted into a knop made of wood covered by thin layers of ivory with added paint. It is decorated with a central element in the form of a fourteen-sided polyhedron. The two long staff elements are composed of sections of bone inlay over a wood core; again, there are traces of paint. The staffs were once fixed together by a series of hooks, and an internal screw of ivory allowed the staff to be joined to the knop. There are a number of repairs to these various joining mechanisms.

On the four principal faces of the knop are carved the symbols of the four Evangelists: the lion, eagle, bull and angel. The other facets of the polyhedral element are decorated with floral scrolls. The cylindrical element rising from the knop, which joins the crook, is carved in the shape of a dragon, or serpent, whose gaping jaws swallow two smaller dragons. The crook itself is carved in the form of a curling serpent, and within the centre of the curl stands a figure of the Lamb of God, its head turned back to confront the serpent, and a staff surmounted by a cross. The crook is engraved with the Latin text often used when the consecrated Host is elevated by the priest prior to communion, *Ecce agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi miserere nobis* ('Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us'). This inscription, with variant spellings, appears on both sides of the crook. The use of serpents and dragons on such an object is an allusion to the rod of Aaron, which was turned into a serpent on Moses' command and consumed the serpents that were created by the Pharaoh's sorcerers.

Inventories preserved in Treviso cite two donations by bishops in the mid–14th century that include ivory pastoral staffs, and this staff may be one of those mentioned. However, the style of the ivory work dates the pastoral staff slightly earlier, to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. It is probably a product of the Veneto region, perhaps made in Treviso itself.

Gabriella Delfini Filippi in *Restituzioni* 1995, pp. 42–4
Pazzi 1988, p. 32

31 | **Altar frontal (*pala d'oro*)**
Venice, *circa* 1230–1300
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 59 cm. Length: 290 cm
Caorle Cathedral

Many of the cathedrals of the Veneto are renowned for their golden altar fronts, which are known in Italian as *pale d'oro*. The term *pala* derives from the Latin word *pallium*, which signifies a cloth covering. Originally, altars were covered by a cloth, but by the Middle Ages the cloth had often been replaced by a sumptuous sheath of precious metal, in some cases ornamented with jewels and enamel. The most famous and luxurious example of an altar-front is the *pala d'oro* in the Basilica of San Marco in Venice, made in Constantinople for the Venetian doge at the end of the tenth century. The commissioning of precious metal altar-fronts for churches became especially widespread in the Veneto area in the 12th–14th centuries, and a number of these *pale* still survive, including the very fine examples in Cividale and Grado. This *pala d'oro* is the chief glory of the cathedral of the city of Caorle, about fifty kilometres northeast of Venice.

The frontal is composed of six panels of silver-gilt over a wood core. The two panels at the ends, portraying the Archangel Gabriel on the left and a bust of the praying Virgin on the right, are earlier than the other four panels and probably date from around 1230. These two panels are highly influenced by Byzantine works and make use of Greek inscription, but their somewhat provincial style suggests they were made in Venice. They each have ornamental, embossed borders. The panel depicting Gabriel on the left combines short strips decorated with a pattern of leaves and tendrils, with roundels embossed with figures of saints on horseback and one striding lion. The right panel with the bust of the Virgin is bordered with rows of medallions containing busts of saints alternating with pairs of standing saints. Technical details of these borders connect them to northern European works and especially to other Venetian metalwork of the early thirteenth century.

The other four panels contain embossed figures traditionally identified as the prophet Daniel, Christ enthroned, Saint Stephen, and Saint John the Baptist; however, their names are not inscribed, and the identifications are not certain. Each of these figures is bordered with embossed panels containing ten busts of saints, which alternate with panels engraved with a pattern of florals around a quatrefoil. The four central panels, clearly the products of a single workshop, show little Byzantine influence and are most likely Venetian works of the late thirteenth century.

The mixture of styles and the lack of iconographic unity indicate that the frontal constitutes a later medieval reworking of elements which may have served a different purpose in this church. It is not known when these panels were joined together in order to create the *pala*. Popular tradition in Caorle held that the *pala* was a gift of the Venetian Queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro,

Detail: the Archangel Gabriel

Detail: Christ enthroned

in thanks for her safe arrival in Caorle during a storm in 1489, but the *pala* certainly predates this event by two centuries.

Gabriella Delfini Filippi in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 68
Giuseppe Cuscito in *Ori e tesori* 1992, pp. 104–5, no. III.2

32 | **Plaque: The angel comforts Saint Mark in prison**
Venice, *circa* 1300
Silver-gilt
35 x 16.5 cm
Museo Correr, Venice

This fragment once belonged to the altar front, known as the *Paliotto di San Marco*, that decorated the altar in the choir of the Basilica of San Marco. The large (over three metres) *pala* is ornamented with embossed plaques in two long rows set within Gothic arches that portray Christ, the Virgin, and the Apostles in the upper row, and thirteen scenes from the life of Saint Mark in the lower row. This badly damaged panel, in which only the angel is left complete, was in the sixth niche from the left. The style of the frontal is highly influenced by the Romanesque art of the Mosan region of western Germany, but there are also Gothic and Byzantine elements. Such a mixture is often found in Venetian work of this period.

The original altar front was completed early in the fourteenth century and certainly before 1325, when the *Paliotto* is listed in an inventory. However, it suffered considerable damage over the years and was restored several times, most extensively in the nineteenth century, when this panel was replaced with a copy. The plaque has been in the Museo Correr since 1859.

Hermann Fillitz in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 40 (see also no. 41)
William D. Wixom in *Treasury* 1984, p. 278
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, p. 153

33 **Reliquary casket**
Venice, early 14th century
Silver-gilt over a wood core, enamel
19.8 x 42.7 x 25.4 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Grado

The casket was made to house relics of the holy bishops Hermagoras and Fortunatus and the female martyrs Euphemia, Thecla, Dorothea and Erasma. It is decorated with embossed silver-gilt figures of these saints, each with an enamelled nimbus, set on a plain silver field. The borders are composed of embossed silver-gilt strips ornamented with a pattern of alternating diamonds and circles containing floral motifs. A silver band at the lower edge of the box has rows of punched rosettes. The casket rests on four cast silver lions.

The lid of the box displays the Crucifixion, with the Virgin and Saint John, and the symbols of the Evangelists in the four corners. On the front is a rock crystal panel through which the relics may be viewed, flanked by the two bishops, Hermagoras and Fortunatus. The two sides portray standing pairs of female martyrs, Dorothea with Erasma, and Euphemia with Thecla.

The style and poses of the figures show the influence of Gothic sculpture, as is often the case with Venetian metalwork of the fourteenth century. A container of relics is recorded as having been given to the Cathedral of Grado by its patriarch Andrea Dotto around 1338, and it is likely that this is the same reliquary. A silver-gilt bookcover from the same workshop is probably from the same donation (cat. no. 34 in this exhibition).

Hermann Fillitz in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 24
Luisa Crusvar in *Ori e tesori* 1992, pp. 154–5, no. V.2

INRI

Front cover (right hand side) and back cover (left hand side)

34 **Bookcover**
Venice, early 14th century
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Front cover, back cover: 24 x 17 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Grado

The ornamental silver-gilt border on this bookcover is identical to that of the reliquary casket (cat. no. 33) from the same treasury in Grado. Therefore, it is likely that this work is part of the same commission by Patriarch Andrea Dotto, *circa* 1338.

The front side of the cover depicts a standing figure of Christ blessing, and the back shows a standing figure of Saint Hermagoras, wearing the bishop's insignia of stole, palium, mitre and pastoral staff, also giving the sign of blessing, with his right hand. In alluding to Hermagoras, a disciple of Saint Mark, the bishops of Grado claimed succession from him in rivalry to the See of Aquileia (see cat. no. 22).

Hermann Fillitz in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 25
Sergio Tavano in *Ori e tesori* 1992, p. 154, no. V.1

35 **Reliquary of Saints Abdon and Sennen**
Venice, 1321
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 17.5 cm. Maximum diameter: 17 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, Chioggia

Four reliquaries preserved in Chioggia (nos 35–38 in this exhibition) and another from Venice itself (no. 39) share stylistic and technical features that suggest that all were made in the same Venetian workshop. The reliquary of Saints Abdon and Sennen bears a date in Latin numerals on the top, MCCCXXI, or 1321, providing the exact year of its manufacture.

The extraordinary shape of this reliquary evokes the *kamelaukion*, the imperial diadem worn by Byzantine emperors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, emperors such as Alexius I and John II Comnenus. It remains in use to this day as the headgear of bishops in the Orthodox Church.

The reliquary is made from sheets of silver nailed to a wooden core. The silver sheets are divided into bands with embossed, engraved, and gilt decoration. The lower figurative band is composed of oval medallions representing Saints Abdon and Sennen, the Virgin, and a facing bust of Christ. A fifth medallion, containing an image of a seated Evangelist, is a later addition, and traces can also be seen of a sixth medallion, now lost. The band above contains flying angels. Bordering these panels are bands of vines and leaves. The base of the reliquary is a silver sheet engraved with the names of these two saints, 'S ABDON ET SENES'. The top is decorated with further bands of vine leaves and four keyhole-shaped apertures for viewing the relics.

The inscription, running in a circular band around the top, reads, 'MEMTO FAMULI TUI MATE FELICI Q K FIERI CAP I Q ST RELIQE S SENESII,', which has been interpreted by Renato Polacco as, 'Remember that the head of your servant [Abdon], with knowledge and good fortune, became a *kamelaukion* in which are the relics of Saint Sennen.'

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 91
F. Spadavecchia in *Restituzioni* 1993, pp. 66–71
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, p. 157, pl. 144
Renato Polacco in *Venezia Arti* 8 (1994), pp. 142–3

36 | **Reliquary of the leg of Saint George**
Venice, *circa* 1320–1330
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 43 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, Chioggia

This reliquary in the shape of a leg is one of three such objects in this exhibition, all from the same Venetian workshop that produced the reliquary of Saints Abdon and Sennen in 1321. It is believed to hold a piece of the leg bone of the soldier saint, George, who is named in the engraved inscription on the calf behind the knee, 'S GEORGIUS MRI' ('Saint George, martyr'). The leg, composed of a silver sheet over a wood core, is covered with a vertical band of silver-gilt decorated with embossed acanthus leaves and horizontal bands with similar patterns. There is a thinner embossed strip at the top surrounding the cover, which is engraved with a depiction of the Crucifixion. At the heel there is another band decorated with vine leaves. The leg ends in a pointed foot, also decorated with a gilt band of stylised vine leaves within a cord-like border. A small, hinged door engraved with a cross was added to the vertical band at a later date to enable the viewing of the relic inside.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 92
F. Spadavecchia in *Restituzioni* 1993, pp. 66–71
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, p. 157, pl. 144

37 **Reliquary of the leg of Saint Abdon**
Venice, *circa* 1320–1330
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 43 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, Chioggia

Like the previous reliquary, this example, depicting the knee and lower leg, is believed to house a fragment of the leg bone of a saint, in this case Saint Abdon, a Persian nobleman martyred in Spain by the Romans. Although of somewhat different proportions from the previous example, this object has nearly identical embossed, silver-gilt bands, decorated with a pattern of acanthus leaves, laid over the silver sheet, which in turn covers a wood core. The bands are further ornamented with a series of diamond-shaped settings containing red and green glass. On the foot, at the base of the ankle, is engraved a simulated buckle. On the sole of the foot is inscribed the name of the saint, ABDON. A hinged door on the vertical band allows the viewing of the relic. The

cover at the top of the reliquary is embossed with symbols of the Crucifixion, including the cross, the nails, the lance and hyssop stick, and the crown of thorns.

Only the thin (one centimetre wide) strip at the top of the leg, decorated with a wicker pattern of four woven strands, differs in its technique and pattern from the rest of the metalwork used on the reliquary. Such work is earlier in date and probably not Venetian. It was probably reused from an older object.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 93
F. Spadavecchia in *Restituzioni* 1993, pp. 66–71
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, p. 157, pl. 144

38 **Reliquary of Saints Sergius and Bacchus**
Venice, *circa* 1320–1330
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 58.5 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, Chioggia

This reliquary, in the shape of an arm, shares the slender proportions of the leg of Saint George (cat. no. 36). Again, the distinctive bands of silver-gilt embossed with a pattern of acanthus leaves decorate the arm, with one long vertical strip and three horizontal bands. In order to view the relic, a hinged door, on which is engraved a cross, was placed on the vertical band. Engraved on the base are the names, 'S. SERGI ET BACHI' ('Saints Sergius and Bacchus'). Sergius and Bacchus were soldiers who were martyred in Syria during the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian. Throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages their cult enjoyed great popularity.

The arm is composed of silver sheet over a wood core, but the hand is cast from silver and has no core. The fingers are elegantly extended, and details are carefully executed, down to the fingernails and creases in the palm.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 94
F. Spadavecchia in *Restituzioni* 1993, pp. 66–71
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, p. 157, pl. 144

39 | **Reliquary of the leg of Saint Tryphon**
Venice, *circa* 1320–1330
Silver-gilt over a wood core
Height: 44 cm
Museo Diocesano di Sant' Apollonia, Venice, inv. no. 206

Formerly kept in the Church of Santa Maria del Giglio in Venice, this leg-shaped reliquary containing relics of Saint Tryphon is closely related to the reliquary of Saint George from Chioggia. They share the same types of decorated silver-gilt bands, although these have been combined in a different way. With this example, the long vertical band is composed of a row of vine leaves within an arching stem. The three horizontal bands at the heel, centre, and top of the leg use the pattern of acanthus leaves. On the foot, the ornamental band is a smaller version of the vine-leaf motif.

Around the ankle there is one strip that is entirely different. It bears a trellis pattern filled with small circular florets. Unlike the other leg reliquaries, which use and contrast both silver and silver-gilt, this example is entirely gilt. A panel for viewing the relic is cut in the vertical band, but it has lost its cover.

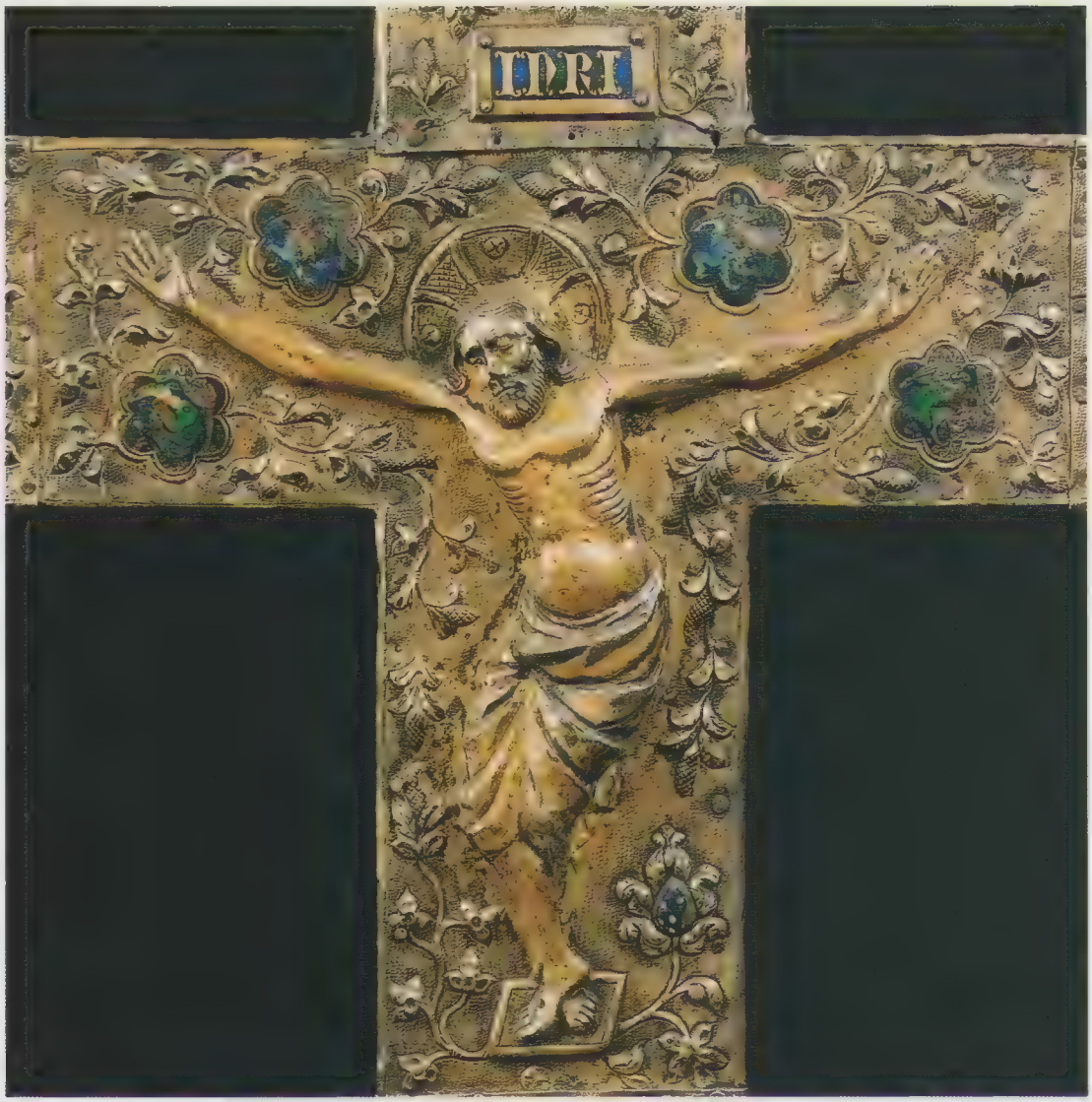
Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 95
H. R. Hahnloser in Hahnloser 1971, p. 157, pl. 144

40 **Reliquary of the head of Saint James the Less**
?Dalmatia, early 14th century
Silver-gilt
Height: 28.5 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Pordenone

This reliquary in the form of a bearded head is of simple workmanship, but the stylised features and carefully worked hair, beard, eyes and eyebrows present a strikingly powerful image. The upper part of the head is hinged so that the relic inside can be exposed. The style of the reliquary is not Byzantine, Gothic, or Venetian, but has more in common with works from the cities on the Dalmatian coast. The history of the piece is not recorded, but it is notable that Pordenone, a city in Friuli, the region northeast of Venice, remained independent of Venice throughout the medieval period and maintained contacts with the cities on the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic. A similar head-reliquary, said to house relics of Pope Sylvester, is preserved in the cathedral of the Croatian port of Zara, suggesting that the Pordenone reliquary may also originate from there.

Of Saint James the Less, the medieval *Golden Legend* says, 'He sang in Jerusalem the first mass that ever was sung therein, and he was the first bishop of Jerusalem.' This was James, son of Alphaeus, who was also known as the 'brother of the Lord'.

Hermann Fillitz in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 101
Carlo Gaberscek in *Oro e tesori* 1992, p. 54, no. II.5
Ganzer 1987, p. 30, no. 1



41 | **Votive cross of the Lady Alda Giuliani**
Venice, 1383
Silver-gilt over a wood core, enamel; a painted wood panel forms the back
67 x 46 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Trieste

The extraordinarily fine metalwork of silver-gilt and enamel was overlaid on an earlier painted wood cross. The painted side (now in poor condition), which depicts the crucified Christ against a cinnabar red background, is thought to be a Sienese work of the early fourteenth century. Later in the fourteenth century, a woman named Alda Giuliani, who is not otherwise known from historical records, commissioned the ornate silver additions to the old cross. The embossed silver-gilt panels are decorated with a representation of the dead Christ on the cross, elaborately ornamented with flowering sprigs and seven enamelled floral medallions. The jewelled and flowered cross, symbolising the 'Tree of Life', was a popular motif in the poetry and imagery of the Middle Ages. At the top of the cross, an angel is pointing heavenwards with his right hand. To the left and right respectively are busts of the Virgin and Saint John in postures of grief. Below the figure of Christ is a representation of the donor herself, kneeling in prayer. Below her, in fine Gothic letters, is an inscription naming her and providing the date, 'MCCCL XXXIII DONNA ALDA ÇULIAN' ('1383, Lady Alda Giuliani').

Hermann Fillitz in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 121
Giuseppe Cuscito in *Ori e tesori* 1992, pp. 68–9, no. II.16

42 **Pair of statuettes: The Virgin and Child, and Saint Vitus**
Venice, 1362
Silver-gilt
Height of both items: 17 cm
Treasury of the Parish Church of San Martino, Marano Lagunare

These small and extremely fine statuettes of cast silver are rare examples of fourteenth-century Venetian sculpture in precious metal. The modelling of the garments, the fine detailing of the tousled hair of Saint Vitus, and the charming gesture of the Christ child, who is straining in the arms of his mother, all attest to the skill of the sculptor. The figures once stood on top of the hands on two arm-reliquaries, which bore the date 1362. These reliquaries, along with a chalice and a cross, formed the 'Treasury of Saint Vitus', which was stolen from the church in 1928. Only these two figures remain.

Saint Vitus, martyred during the persecutions of the emperor Diocletian in the late third century, was a very popular saint in the medieval period and was credited with the power of helping those who suffered from afflictions of the brain.

Carlo Gaberscek in *Ori e tesori* 1992, p. 63, no. II.13

43 | **Chalice**
Venice, *circa* 1420
Silver-gilt, enamel
30 x 17 cm
Church of San Pantalon, Venice

The silver-gilt cup is joined to an elaborately decorated stem and base. The octagonal, lobed base rises on an openwork step on top of which are a series of enamel medallions containing images of saints. The stem rises in a series of modelled acanthus leaves to an octagonal, openwork element and then an ornate architectural structure of Gothic arches within which stand silver-gilt figures of saints and angels.

Like the pastoral staff from San Marco (cat. no. 21), which shares many details of decoration, this chalice is most likely a product of the Sesto family workshop in Venice, which was active around 1420. Several other similar chalices from the same workshop survive, including one in the Treasury of San Marco.

E. Steingräber in Hahnloser 1971, p. 181, pl. 173
Annalisa Perissa Torrini, unpublished notes, 1996

44 | Chalice
Venice, third quarter of the 15th century
Silver-gilt
31 x 20 cm
Museo Diocesana, Church of Santa Eufemia, Venice

Still in Gothic style, but even more ornate than the chalice from the early fifteenth-century Sesto workshop in the Church of San Pantalon (cat. no. 43), this chalice has been assigned to the same workshop that produced a lavish pair of candelabra for Doge Cristoforo Moro (reigned 1462–1471) now in the Treasury of San Marco.

The hexagonal, lobed base has a raised step of open-work quatrefoils around which sit six dragons and on top of which busts of Christ, the Virgin, and the four virgin martyrs are placed among an intricately detailed pattern of grapevines. The stem is an architectural fantasy composed of Gothic windows, buttresses, and arches within which sit silver-gilt putti. Around the base of the cup is another band of entwined vines with busts of angels.

Giovanni Mariacher in *Arte a Venezia* 1971, p. 234–5, no. 113
E. Steingräber in Hahnloser 1971, p. 186
Annalisa Perissa Torrini, unpublished notes, 1996

45 | **Brooch**
Venice, mid–15th century
Silver-gilt with enamel
Diameter: 12 cm
Church of San Pantalon, Venice

This highly unusual pin is thought to have been used to fasten a bishop's cope. In the centre, Saint Giuliana, holding a palm branch symbolising her martyrdom, stands within a Gothic arch, which is part of a more elaborate architectural structure of windows, columns, and a domed roof. The round, six-lobed frame is ornamented with flowers and leaves moulded in relief, and vine and floral patterns in inlaid green and white enamel. The silver backing shows through the openwork, and on the silver are placed four stars. A filigree border surrounds the frame, and six crowns are attached to the edge.

Saint Giuliana was another victim of the infamous persecution of the Emperor Diocletian, and was martyred in Nicomedia in 304. She was invoked against the plague, which made her cult very popular in the fourteenth century, and she was also a patron of the city of Verona.

Giovanni Mariacher in *Arte a Venezia* 1971, p. 242, no. 117
Annalisa Perissa Torrini, unpublished notes, 1996

46 | **Reliquary**
Venice, 15th century
Silver-gilt, rock crystal
Height: 44.5 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Pordenone

This reliquary is elaborately architectural in form, a fanciful rendering of a four-spired Gothic church, replete with many traceried windows, buttresses, niches and turrets. Each of the spires is tipped with a finial in the shape of a *fleur-de-lys*. The relics were viewed through the crystal of the lower part of this shrine-like structure. The base is a quatrefoil embellished with triangular sections at the junction of each lobe, and raised on a step of small quatrefoils in openwork. The faces of each side of the base are engraved with alternating floral and scale patterns. The knop is a combination of niches and turrets, with small cast figures set within each arch.

Giuseppe Cuscito in *Ori e tesori* 1992, p. 92, no. II.34
Ganzer 1987, p. 36, no. 14

47 **Monstrance**
Venice, 15th century
Silver-gilt, enamel, rock crystal
Height: 37.5 cm
Treasury of the Cathedral, Pordenone

Like the contemporary reliquary from Pordenone (cat. no. 46), this monstrance takes a fantastic, architectural shape. The base has six lobes decorated with three florals alternating with three engraved medallions, once enamelled. Six dragons perch facing down the hexagonal shaft, which joins a knop in the form of a hexagonal shrine with six mullioned windows filled with blue enamel and an upper element of crenellation. Above this, a border of acanthus leaves on a ribbed structure supports the hexagonal rock crystal body, which held the Host. The lid is a twelve-ribbed dome edged with round turrets with pinnacles and surmounted by a cast figure of an angel. The dome's base displays engraving considered modern in origin. Underneath the monstrance is engraved the lion of Saint Mark, confirming the Venetian origin of the work.

Carlo Gaberscek in *Ori e tesori* 1992, p. 92–3, no. II.35
Ganzer 1987, p. 37, no. 15

48 **Pastoral staff**
Venice, early 15th century
Silver-gilt, copper, traces of enamel
Length: 181 cm
Church of the Abbey of Moggio Udinese

This pastoral staff is in late Gothic style, with a knop shaped like the lantern of a Gothic church. Within the niches are engraved figures of the Virgin and Child, Saint John the Baptist, who holds a scroll engraved 'ECCE AGNUS DEI' ('Behold the Lamb of God'), Saint Margaret of Antioch, the patron saint of pregnant women, Saint John the Evangelist, and an unidentified saint in the garb of an abbot. The background bears traces of enamel. The staff is decorated with embossed patterns of florals and stylised foliage. The curved crook is ornamented with embossed bands of geometric patterns.

At the centre of the crook stands a cast, silver-gilt figure of the winged lion of Saint Mark. The use of such a figure, which has no connection with the symbolism of the staff, suggests that the object may be an official donation from the *Signoria* or Church of Venice to the Abbey of Moggio, located about forty-five kilometres north of Udine.

Carlo Gaberscek in *Ori e tesori* 1992, pp. 64–5, no. II.14

49 | **Processional cross**
Venice, late 15th century
Silver, bronze, semiprecious stones
Height: 63 cm
Collection: Venice, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari

This ornate processional cross dates from the late fifteenth century. The figural work is in embossed silver and bronze, and semiprecious stones are liberally added for decorative effect. The cross has undergone restoration at least twice and presents a somewhat curious mix of iconographical elements. On the front a cast figure of Christ is placed on the cross. At the foot of the cross is engraved a skull, representing Adam's burial place on Golgotha. The top of the cross contains an image of God the Father in the act of blessing. To the left is the winged lion of the Evangelist Saint Mark, and to the right is the bull, the symbol of Saint Luke. Attached to the back of the cross is a cast statuette of Saint George, dressed in armour, slaying the dragon, the symbol of evil. Saint George, like Saint Mark, was one of the patron saints of Venice. Engraved on the arms of the cross, to the left and right, are busts of the Virgin and Saint John, who ordinarily are found flanking Christ on the cross. Above is an eagle, the symbol of Saint John the Evangelist, and below is an angel, the emblem of Saint Matthew.

A. Manno in *San Marco Evangelista* 1994, no. II.7
Pazzi 1976, pp. 42–4, no. 15
Adriana Augusti, unpublished notes, 1996

50 **Two miniatures from the *mariegola* of the Scuola Grande di San Marco**
Venice, 14th century
Painted vellum
Both items: 32 x 23.2 cm
Biblioteca of the Museo Civico Correr, Venice, ms. IV, 83

The Scuola Grande di San Marco was one of the great philanthropic confraternities (called *scuole*) of medieval Venice. These two painted pages are all that remain of the *mariegola*, or charter, of that confraternity. One page depicts Christ tied to the column, being scourged by the Roman soldiers. The other folio shows Saint Mark enthroned, blessing the brothers of the scuola, who kneel, holding their standard and the *mariegola* itself.

The miniatures display the mixture of stylistic elements often seen in Venice at this date. The architectural details and the garb of the figures are distinctly Western, as is the style of their facial features. The borders, with their formal bands ornamented with circular medallions of saints and the Evangelist's symbols, and the use of contrasting vermilion, blue and olive, is reminiscent of the enamelled borders of a Byzantine book cover. This skilful and harmonious mingling of Byzantine and Western elements within the same object, along with its high quality, has led some scholars to suggest that it is the work of Paolo Veneziano (see cat. no. 60), the first great Venetian painter. Others doubt this attribution, noting that no other miniature by the artist is known.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 46
Lino Moretti in *Venezia e Bisanzio* 1974, no. 96
Gabriella Delfini Filippi, unpublished notes, 1996

51 | **Samite decorated with parrots (*sciamito dei pappagalli*)**
Spanish or Italian, mid–13th century
Silk
163 x 110 cm
Museo Diocesano, Treviso

This textile is called a 'samite', a term which derives from the Greek word 'hexamiton', which means a cloth woven from six threads. This technique originated in the Byzantine East and spread via Islamic influence throughout the Mediterranean, with outstanding examples coming from Sicily, southern Italy, and Spain. The pattern of two parrots standing back-to-back with their heads reverted is an early Christian motif that remained popular in the Byzantine period.

In this example the two parrots are shown flanking a chalice. The birds, yellow against a red background, are placed within a circular border ornamented with palmettes. Rows of these medallions are bordered with floral stars. The border of the cloth is woven with a pattern imitating Arabic inscriptions in Kufic script, which reflects the influence of Islamic textiles. Similar textiles were woven in various parts of Italy, Sicily, and Spain.

This samite was used to wrap the body of Saint Parisio, a Camaldolite monk from Bologna who came to Treviso to head the Convent of Santa Cristina (later named the Convent of Saints Cristina and Parisio). Saint Parisio died in 1267, allegedly at the age of 116, and his body was interred in the walls of the convent. In 1810 the convent was closed and the relics of the saint were transferred to the Cathedral of Treviso.

Ericani and Frattaroli 1993, pp. 196–200 and 310–11

52 | **Cope**
Venice, second half of the 15th century
Silk, silk velvet, gold threads
137 x 301 cm
Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice

Tradition relates that this magnificent cope was originally a mantle belonging to the wife of Doge Pasquale Malipiero (reigned 1457–1462). It was a common custom for persons of high rank to make gifts of their ceremonial robes to the Church so these could be reworked into vestments for the clergy.

The main field of this cope is of thick velvet pile dyed with a crimson substance extracted from insects that dwelt on the Kermes Oak, a tree that grows in Asia Minor. The dyeing process was a secret guarded closely by the Venetians, and the dye, which was also used on leather, came to be known as Venetian Red. Along the straight edge of this vestment, there is an embroidered zone which consists of a central panel depicting the Annunciation, flanked on either side by four saints within niches surmounted by rounded arches. An embroidered shield with a depiction of Christ in Majesty completes the ornamentation. From this hangs a tassel with twelve knots, an insignia that indicates that this cope would have been reserved for use by bishops.

Doretta Davanzo Poli, unpublished notes, 1996

53 | **Cope**
Iran and Venice, second half of the 16th century,
with 17th century additions
Silk with silver-gilt embroidery
140 x 297 cm
Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice

The hemispherical field of this cope is an excellent example of embroidered silk brocade from sixteenth-century Iran. The pattern of this brocade consists of crimson tulip and gold pomegranate motifs set amid a pattern of tendrils, foliage and rosettes on a pale blue background. This rich ornamentation is closely related to the designs on carpets from Tabriz in Iran dating to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The embroidered panel along the straight edge and the ornamental shield are additions of seventeenth-century Venetian embroidery.

The brocade field is itself made up of several uneven panels pieced together, indicating that this cope, as with the cope in this exhibition that was formerly a mantle belonging to a doge's wife (cat. no. 52), was adapted from some earlier costume. Sumptuous robes from Persia and Turkey were in fact often received by the Venetian nobility as diplomatic gifts.

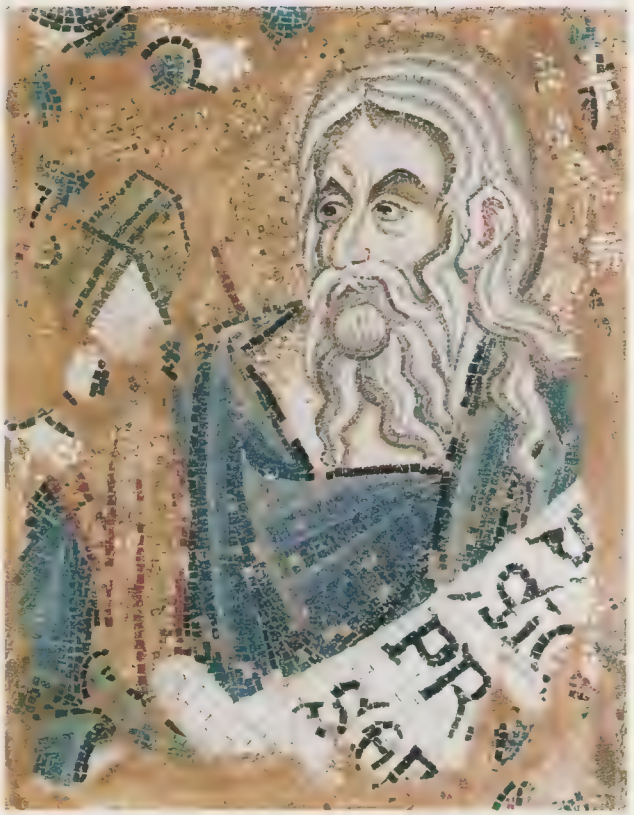
Cox 1914
Podreiner 1928, p. 188
Serra 1937, no. 85
Doretta Davanzo Poli, unpublished notes, 1996

54 **Mosaic fragment: The Holy Women**
Venice, 10th or 11th century
Mosaic: glass and stone tesserae
65 x 48 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This mosaic was discovered in 1954, hidden under a marble facing of twelfth-century date on a pillar in the chancel of the Basilica of San Marco. Its location under stonework of this age and its distinctive style both point to an early date of production. Although the Byzantine style of the mosaic is clear, its precise date is controversial, and two plausible possibilities have been suggested. The first is that the work is part of the restorations made after the fire in the Basilica in 976. Scholars have cited stylistic affinities with ninth-century Byzantine mosaics, such as those in the now-destroyed Dormition Church in Nicaea, the mosaic portraying the *Proskinesis* before Christ of the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (reigned 886–912) in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, and the fragmentary mosaic depicting the Virgin, now in the Benaki Museum in Athens, thought to have come from the Studios Monastery in Constantinople. Alternatively, the mosaic could have been added during the renovations carried out by Doge Domenico Contarini (reigned 1043–1071). There are also stylistic similarities to Byzantine mosaics of the eleventh century, notably those at Nea Moni on the Greek island of Chios, which were made between 1042 and 1056. In any event, it is clear that highly skilled Byzantine mosaicists were commissioned to work at Venice.

The fragment belongs to the lower left edge of a Crucifixion scene of conventional, Byzantine composition, and depicts the mourning women at the base of the cross. Another fragment representing angels is still *in situ* in the Basilica. The mosaic uses richly coloured stone and glass tesserae, with the facial features and folds of the garments defined in a linear manner using dark brown glass. The vivid colours and expressive features of the women are characteristic of the finest Byzantine work.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 126
Italo Furlan in *Venezia e Bisanzio* 1974, no. 33
Galassi 1955, pp. 242–8
Ettore Merkel, unpublished notes, 1996



55 **Mosaic fragment: Head of a Prophet (Abraham)**
Venice, 14th century
Mosaic: stone and glass tesserae
86 x 64 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

Like the mosaic fragment depicting John the Baptist (cat. no. 56), this example comes from the baptistery of the Basilica and was salvaged during restoration work in the late nineteenth century. It too dates to the same commission by Doge Andrea Dandolo in the mid–14th century. The expressive image of the elderly Abraham, with his flowing white hair and beard and piercing gaze, is full of expressiveness and emotional tension. The restrained colouring of the mosaic is predominately in tones of white, gray, dark blue and green.

The identification of the prophet as Abraham is based on the reading of the fragmentary Latin inscription on the scroll he holds, '[VISITAVIT DOMINUS] S[ARAM] SIC[UT] PR[OMI]SER[AT],', which refers to the visit of the Three Angels of the Lord to Sarah and Abraham in the garden of Mamre.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 128
Giovanni Mariacher in *Venezia e Bisanzio* 1974, no. 93
Giovanni Mariacher in *Arte a Venezia* 1971, p. 9, no. 4
Ettore Merkel, unpublished notes, 1996

56 | Mosaic fragment: Saint John the Baptist
Venice, 14th century
Mosaic: stone and glass tesserae
157 x 91.5 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This large fragment of mosaic depicts the great prophet of the wilderness, John the Baptist, receiving a cloak from an angel. John is wearing a fleecy tunic, or hair shirt. This penitential garb, along with the scroll he holds, which reads (in Greek) 'Repent ye,', is a reference to John's role as the 'caller to account' who prepared the way for Christ.

The mosaic is one of the scenes from the life of this prophet which decorated the baptistery of the Basilica, most of which are still in place. They date from the reign of Doge Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354). The style contrasts markedly with the earlier mosaic of the Holy Women (cat. no. 54). The colouring is more restrained, and there is extensive use of gold background. The artist has conveyed the energy of the subject by giving him an animated stance. His dishevelled hair matches the fleece of his tunic. The mosaic is stylistically close to Byzantine work of this period, especially that done in Macedonia.

The mosaic was saved from destruction by one of the workers restoring the Basilica in the late nineteenth century.

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 127
Ettore Merkel, unpublished notes, 1996

57 | Mosaic fragment: Two Magi
Venice, 14th century
Mosaic: stone and glass tesserae
78 x 89.5 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This mosaic fragment once decorated the baptistery of the Basilica of San Marco, and, like the previous two mosaics (cat. nos 55 and 56), was removed during renovations in the late nineteenth century and replaced with a modern reconstruction.

The fourteenth-century mosaics in the baptistery illustrate episodes of both the life of Saint John the Baptist and the childhood of Christ. This example shows two of the three Magi before King Herod. In contrast to the other two mosaic fragments from the baptistery, the mosaicist made use of vivid colours in the richly decorated robes and crowns of the kings.

Giovanni Mariacher in *Arte a Venezia* 1971, p. 9, no. 6
Maria Da Villa Urbani, unpublished notes, 1996

58 **Copy of a mosaic: The entry of the birds into the ark**
Late 19th century
Tempera on paper
135 x 187 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

This careful copy was made as a record of the state of the mosaic before it was restored in 1887. The original mosaic can be seen in the atrium of the Basilica of San Marco in the south vault of the entrance bay on the western side. It is one of an extensive series of scenes based on the Book of Genesis, and was set up soon after an earthquake damaged the Basilica in 1223.

This particular scene relates to the preparation for the Great Flood and depicts Noah placing the birds in the ark. The finely detailed birds are arranged, by the Divine instruction, in groups of seven (those deemed clean) or two (those deemed unclean) (Genesis 7:2). Noah himself carries a pair of peacocks. The accompanying inscription that appears above is based on Genesis 7:8–9: 'Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.'

Roberto Barison in *Omaggio a San Marco* 1994, no. 130

59 **Relief of Saint John the Evangelist**
Venice, 13th century
Marble
168 x 93 cm
Procuratoria of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice

Five large marble reliefs portraying the four seated Evangelists and the enthroned Christ were placed on the north side of the facade of the Basilica of San Marco above the projecting walls of the Mascoli Chapel, near the Porta dei Fiori. Two of these reliefs, the enthroned Christ and this example, Saint John the Evangelist, were removed in 1973 and have not been returned to their outdoor location.

Saint John is seated facing right on a chair, his head turned to the front, and he holds a scroll on which he writes. He is identified by an abbreviated Latin inscription, 'S[AN]C[TU]S IOH[ANN]ES EVA[N]G[E]L[ISTA]' ('Saint John, the Evangelist'). Behind him stands a female figure, Sophia, the personification of Divine Inspiration. The relief representing Christ may be by the same sculptor, but the other reliefs of Saints Mark, Luke, and Matthew appear to be by different hands, although of similar date.

There is little scholarly agreement regarding the date and purpose of these reliefs. Some observers have seen strong Byzantine influence and have thought that the series of reliefs served the function of icons. Although some Byzantine influence can be detected, notably in the figure of Christ and the composition of Saint John accompanied by Sophia, the style of the carvings is more Western. However, Venetian art of this period often combines Byzantine and Western elements. On stylistic grounds, there has been general agreement that the sculptures belong to the thirteenth century, but some scholars have proposed an early thirteenth-century date, perhaps after the fire of 1231, while recent arguments suggest a date later in the third quarter of the thirteenth century.

G. Tigler in Demus 1995, pp. 40–41, no. 25
Fulvio Zuliani in *Venezia e Bisanzio* 1974, no. 57

60 **Paolo Veneziano**
The Crucifixion
Circa 1349 (unsigned, undated)
Tempera on wood
96.8 x 67.7 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,
Felton Bequest

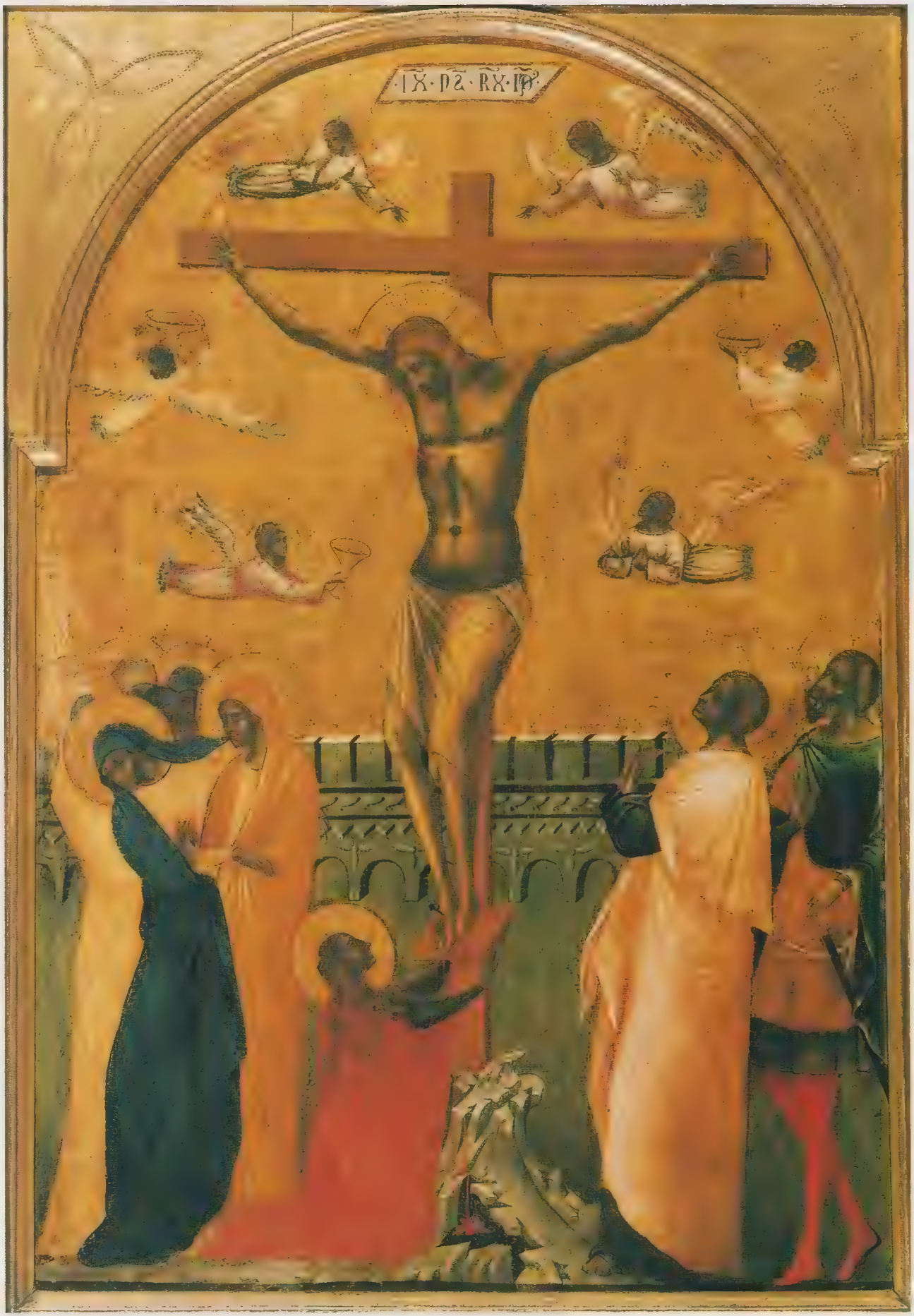
When this fine Crucifixion first came to the attention of scholars about seventy years ago, it was believed to be the work of the Venetian master, Niccolo Semitecolo (active *circa* 1353–1370). Since then it has been shown convincingly that this work has a very close relationship with a group of panels known to be by Paolo Veneziano. The closest of these is a Crucifixion that forms part of a polyptych in the Oratory of San Martino at Chioggia, but there are other variants in Trieste, Parma, and Rab in Dalmatia. The structure of the panel, where the scene is contained within an arched window, suggests that it was originally part of a triptych.

The iconography and style of this painting show all the masterful blending of Byzantine and Gothic elements for which Paolo was renowned. Several details of the composition are strongly Byzantine in inspiration, in particular the rocky crag of Golgotha, the crenellated walls of Jerusalem, and the lamenting angels. All of these details can be found in an icon of the Crucifixion from the Church of the Peribleptos in Ochrid dating to the end of the thirteenth century, which can be taken as representative of the prototype that Paolo could have referred to in composing this work. The dark and sorrowful faces are painted in a manner that is very similar to work of the Paleologan period from the Byzantine capital. These sombre faces have little in common with those depicted in the *mariegola* of the Scuola Grande of San Marco (cat. no. 50), a work considered by some to be by the same artist.

On the other hand, the figures on either side of the cross owe more to the conventions of Gothic art, as does the rendering of Christ's loincloth. It has been suggested that the depiction of the swooning Virgin is a type that originated in Armenia, but it is not a pose found in Byzantine images of the Crucifixion. In the Greek world, this depiction is usually found in icons painted specifically for Catholic patrons, such as would be found in the Venetian-dominated islands of the Aegean. The kneeling figure of the Magdalen at the foot of the cross makes an interesting comparison with the similarly posed image of the Lady Alda Giuliani on the silver votive cross of 1383 (cat. no. 41).

In her recent entry on this work, Hoff has reaffirmed the dating of this work to around 1349, the year after the presumed date of completion of the Chioggia Crucifixion. This dating would place this moving and beautiful work in the immediate aftermath of the first outbreak of the Black Death, which struck Venice with great ferocity in 1348.

Hoff 1995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61 | **Lorenzo Veneziano**
Saint Mark
Venice, 1371
Oil on panel
114 x 44 cm
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, inv. no. 203

The artist Lorenzo, called Lorenzo Veneziano, was the most significant painter in Venice during the third quarter of the fourteenth century, succeeding his colleague, Paolo (also called Veneziano, but no relation), who died before 1362. This image of Saint Mark is paired with another panel depicting Saint Peter, also in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice. They once stood alongside a *Resurrection of Christ*, believed to be the example now in Milan, and a *Madonna and Child*, now lost, in the Ufficio della Seta on the Rialto in Venice, and were moved to the museum in 1812. The two panels were painted together and are signed and dated along the lower edges, 'M.CCC.LXXI.MESE.NOVEB.' ('In the month of November, 1371') on the picture of Saint Peter, and 'LAURECI.PINXIT HOC OP' ('Lorenzo painted this work') on the present panel.

Saint Mark is shown as an imposing figure, standing frontally, his head turned slightly to the side. He holds the Gospels and gestures with his right hand. His mass of garments are richly coloured: an orange-red tunic beneath a blue cloak with green trim. Lorenzo has departed from the Byzantinising style of Venice, and shows the considerable influence of the paintings of northern Italy, especially of Bologna, where he is known to have worked a few years earlier.

Moschini Marconi 1955, pp. 12–13, no. 8
Annalisa Perissa Torrini, unpublished notes, 1996

GLOSSARY

acanthus
A plant native to Greece and Turkey bearing thistle-like leaves. The pattern of these leaves was much favoured for ornamental purposes in the ancient and medieval periods.

agate
Noncrystalline, translucent form of quartz.

Anastasis
Iconographic group representing the Resurrection in the Orthodox tradition, where Christ is depicted in a white robe, clasping his cross, in the act of lifting Adam and Eve out of their tombs.

architrave
Lowest part of an entablature, resting upon columns. See also *entablature*.

atrium
Open courtyard situated at the front of a church, normally colonnaded.

balustrade
Railing supported by short upright pillars.

basilica
Longitudinal as distinct from central-plan church. Also a designation for a major church, from 'basilikon'—royal.

basse-taille
See *enamel*.

cabochon
Precious or semiprecious stone that is simply polished; it is without cut facets, and often imitated in glass.

caliph, caliphate
Legitimate successor to the spiritual authority of the Prophet Mohammed, and the State which that potentate ruled.

cameo
(Raised) relief; a precious or semiprecious stone carved in this manner.

capital
Crowning segment of a stone column, often elaborately carved.

Catholic
For the purposes of this catalogue the term 'Catholic', which means in its general sense 'universal', has been applied to the Western, Latin-speaking Church in communion with the Church of Rome, in contrast with the Eastern, Greek (or Slavonic) speaking Orthodox Church. Note: this usage is for convenience only. See also *Orthodox*.

chalice
Cup used to hold the wine during the Eucharistic service in Christian Churches. In the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, the stem of the cup usually has a spherical knop. See also *knop*.

champlevé enamel
See *enamel*.

chancel
The section of a church reserved for the use of the clergy, usually separated from the main body of the building by means of a screen. This section contains the high altar, on the eastern end of the building.

chasing
Technique of working with metal from the front with tools such as chisels.

ciborium
In the early Church, a canopy over an altar, raised up on four columns, holding receptacles containing the Eucharist. Later it came to be used as a term for a container for the Host itself.

cloisonné enamel
See *enamel*.

codex
Bound book, usually composed of parchment pages.

colobium
Long undergarment or tunic, may have sleeves.

Comnenian Period
Era of rule by the Comnenus family (1081–1185) in the Byzantine Empire.

condottiere
A mercenary or paid soldier.

confraternity
A brotherhood of people with a common profession, ethnic background, or place of association, often dedicated to a particular saint and governed by a set of rules usually of a religious nature.

cope
Mantle worn by clergy of all ranks; of semicircular shape, it is often enriched with embroidery and jewels.

Covenant
A binding agreement between the people and the Godhead. Sometimes used to describe the message of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

crozier
In the Catholic tradition, a bishop's or abbot's staff.

Deesis
Iconographic group consisting of Christ between the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist: other figures can flank this basic group.

Deposition
Iconographic group consisting of Christ, already dead, being taken off the Cross in the presence of his mother and close female relatives, and the Roman soldiery.

diadem
A metal or cloth band, often jewelled, worn around the head as a symbol of sovereignty.

doge
Chief Magistrate of the Republic of Venice, derived from 'dux', a military commander of the Late Roman Empire, and thus related to the term 'duke'.

Dormition
See *Koimesis*.

embossing
Technique of working sheet metal from the back, with hammers and punches, to produce raised relief decoration on the front.

enamel
Glass heated to the point at which it melts and bonds with metal with which it is in contact. Cloisonné enamel: a form of enamelling in which the different colours of glass are separated by metal strips set on edge (cloisons), which can also be used for internal drawing and for inscriptions. Champlevé enamel: a form of enamelling in which the cells for the enamel are gouged out of the metal instead of being added to it, as in the cloisonné technique. Basse-taille enamel: a form of enamelling where translucent enamel is used, allowing figures or motifs chased or engraved in the metal to be seen through the coloured glass.

engraving
Technique of cutting patterns into a surface with a sharp tool.

entablature
The horizontal section of a building that rests upon supporting columns and which often takes the form of a frieze with ornamental cornices.

Eucharist
Christian Thanksgiving service culminating in the consecration of bread and wine. Also, the consecrated bread itself.

Evangelist
The writer of one of the first four books of the Christian New Testament, which were known in Greek as the Evangelia or 'Good News'—godspel in Old English.

Fatimid
A dynasty of caliphs based in Egypt, who claimed descent from Fatima, a daughter of the prophet Mohammed. The Fatimids ruled from the early tenth to the late twelfth centuries. See also *caliph*.

filigree
Finely drawn-out wire or beads of gold or silver annealed or soldered together to form a pattern.

fleur-de-lys
Literally a 'lily flower', but in fact this shape, which was commonly used in simplified form as a design element and in heraldry, probably derives from the shape of the flower of the common Iris (*Iris germanica*). Like the profile of that flower, the *fleur-de-lys* combines a central pointed lobe element with outer lobes that fold downwards on each side.

foliate
Having the appearance of leaves.

gradual
A book containing chants set to music (plain-song) that are sung between readings in the early part of the Christian Liturgy.

Hetoimasia, Hetimasia
Preparation for the second coming of Christ, symbolised by an unoccupied throne, a cross, and the Scriptures, ready for the Last Judgement.

Hodeghetria, Hodegetria
Iconographic type of representation of the Virgin holding the infant Christ, reproducing a greatly venerated icon said to have been painted from life by Saint Luke.

hyssop
A plant of the mint family that was credited with healing powers. While on the Cross, Christ was offered a mixture of hyssop and vinegar to sip from a sponge attached to a stick.

icon, ikon
A painted, carved, or wrought two-dimensional image of a saint or Person of the Holy Trinity, used in the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, for veneration by the faithful.

Iconoclasm
The destruction of images. An official ban on religious images in Byzantium lasting, with one interruption, from 726 to 843.

iconoclast
Supporter of the suppression of religious images.

iconodule
Supporter of religious images and therefore an opponent of iconoclasm. See also *Iconoclasm*.

iconostasis
Partition dividing the sanctuary from the body of an Orthodox church, used for the display of icons.

kamelaukion
The rounded crown based on the ancient Persian Mitra, originally devised as the headgear of Byzantine emperors of the twelfth century, but eventually adopted by bishops in the Orthodox Church as a symbol of authority.

knop
Knob, usually not at an extremity.

Koimesis
Literally, the 'falling asleep'—referring to the final hours in the life of the Virgin Mary, and celebrated as a great feast of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches on 15 August.

Kufic
Ancient Arabic script of geometric appearance, used for ornamentation and often imitated without the inscription having any meaning (pseudo-Kufic).

lanceolate
Shaped like a spearhead.

lantern
A turret pierced by windows that allows light to penetrate into a church or other building. In Gothic churches a lantern could be highly ornate and was usually surmounted by a spire. Sometimes simulated in metalwork.

lectionary
Books containing Gospel and other texts rearranged in an order to suit the Church calendar.

Lombardic, Lombards
The last Germanic barbarian tribe to move down into Italy in the sixth century. Their name was said to derive from 'Longobarbi'—the long-beards.

lozenge
See *rhombus*.

maphorion
Long sleeveless tunic with hood, often seen in Byzantine representations of the Virgin Mary.

mitre
The headgear of a bishop. In the Catholic tradition the mitre takes the form of a double-peaked cap that represents the flame of the Holy Spirit that descended on the Apostles at Pentecost. The Orthodox mitre is rounded and is based on the Kamelaukion. See also *Kamelaukion*.

monstrance
Reliquary or liturgical vessel with rock-crystal or glass allowing the consecrated bread to be seen and venerated as the Body of Christ. Normally only used in the Catholic tradition.

Mosan
Pertaining to the region of the river Maas (in French, Meuse), especially its twelfth-century Romanesque art.

naos
Nave, or main body of a church.

narthex
Vestibule of a church.

niello
Black alloy, usually acanthite (silver sulphide), used decoratively to contrast with bright metal.

nimbus, nimbate
A bright or golden disc, either circular or lens-shaped, signifying the sanctity or glory of the person contained within or for whom it forms a background.

orans
In an attitude of prayer, especially with arms raised and outstretched, or extended forwards, palms out.

orant
Person depicted 'orans'; see *orans*.

oratory
A chapel usually reserved for private use.

Orthodox
For the purposes of this catalogue the term 'Orthodox', which carries a general sense of correct belief, has been applied to the Eastern, Greek (or Slavonic) speaking Church in communion with the Church of Constantinople, in contrast with the Western, Latin-speaking Catholic Church. Note: this is a usage of convenience only.

pala, paliotto
'Altar-frontal' in Italian.

Paleologan Period
The era of rule by the Paleologus family (1261–1453) in the Byzantine Empire.

pallium
A symbol of authority worn by the pope and bestowed by him on patriarchs, metropolitan archbishops, and rarely, as a mark of honour, on bishops. It takes the form of a narrow ring-like band of wool worn around the neck, from which pendent strips hang down at the front and back.

palmette
Ornament based on the shape of a palm tree or leaf.

Pantocrator, Pantokrator
Iconographic type representing Christ Almighty, a half-length or standing (or enthroned) figure holding a codex in his left hand and blessing with his right.

paten
Dish for the Eucharist bread.

patriarch, patriarchate
In general terms, any one of the main characters of the Old Testament. Also the title of certain senior bishops of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and the seat of their jurisdiction.

patrician
One of the highest dignitaries of the empire; a military or civil title.

piviale
Italian for 'cope'. See also *cope*.

polyptych
A composite painting with many panels, usually of wood, which are fastened together with hinges, and which can often be folded in on themselves to form a more compact unit. Often painted with many scenes unified by a common theme. See also *triptych*.

primate
A senior clergyman of a district or of a major church. The correct term is sometimes (as in the case of the Basilica of San Marco) 'Primicerius'.

proskinesis
Ritual prostration. An act of veneration requiring the subordinate person to fall flat on their stomach before the one who is adored. Proskinesis was required of a subject or ambassador when entering the presence of a Byzantine emperor.

protome
Forepart, foot.

putto, putti (pl.)
Eros, cupid, cherub, small child in playful pose.

quatrefoil
A four-lobed shape where the rounded lobes emanate from a central point.

reliquary
A container designed to hold and display a sacred relic.

repoussé
Embossed. See also *embossing*.

Rhenish
Pertaining to the region of the river Rhine.

rhombus
An oblique-sided parallelogram with four equal sides; a diamond shape.

rinceau
Decorative scroll, usually of vegetal form.

rosette
A decorative element that takes the shape of a rose bloom.

roundel
A small circular decorative element; a medallion.

Saracens, Saracenic
The Arabic-speaking tribes of Syria and Palestine, and later a term for Muslims generally.

sardonyx
A banded form of agate, or noncrystalline translucent quartz.

sciamito, samite
A rich silk cloth interwoven with gold or silver thread, from the Byzantine Greek term 'hexamiton'—six threads.

See
The region of jurisdiction of a bishop.

Signoria
In medieval Venice, this term referred to the doge and his advisory body of six councillors.

tempera
Ground mineral and vegetable pigments, usually mixed with a medium such as egg yolk or gum arabic or water to form a paint.

tesserae
Literally 'four-sided ones'; glass or stone cubes used in mosaic work.

Theotokos
Title for the Virgin—Mother of God (literally, 'god-bearer').

tracery
Delicate and ornate carving on architectural structures of the Gothic period.

trefoil
The shape of a cloverleaf (from 'Trifolium'—clover) with three rounded lobes emanating from a central point.

triptych
A multipanelled painting having three components. In many triptychs the outer panels are half the size of the central one and are hinged so that they can be folded in and over it. See also *polyptych*.

vellum
The prepared skin of a calf, lamb, or kid, which is pared down to a degree of thinness where it becomes translucent. Vellum was the highest quality medium for fine writing and manuscript illumination in the Middle Ages.

volute
A spiral formation.

votive
Having to do with a gift or offering that has been made in fulfilment of a vow.

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